

## Councillors Briefing Note

### No. 185

**Department:** Transformation

**Further Enquiries to:**  
Marie Nash – Project Officer

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**Direct Line:** 01225 712617

### Wiltshire Online Programme – January to March 2014 news update

*The Wiltshire Online programme aim is to remove the barriers to getting online for the residents of Wiltshire. Cost, skills and infrastructure have been identified as the three biggest barriers and progress is being made to remove all of these.*

#### Summary of Progress

- The Great Western Broadband (GWB) has released the names of the third communities to benefit from the project and residents will be able to order improved broadband from end of summer 2014
- The Wiltshire Online website has undergone further development and an 'Exchange Area' map has been published to advise residents when fibre broadband work is expected to begin in their area
- Superfast Business support successfully launched and several animation events held across the county with more due in the coming months
- A team of volunteers are delivering free basic IT support across more than 85% of the county
- The refurbished laptop pilot was a success and further laptops have now been secured to be distributed to eligible Wiltshire residents

#### Refurbished Laptops

All 150 laptops from the original pilot have now been issued to Carers Support Wiltshire and Age UK Salisbury, with Carers Support Wiltshire already requesting more to be delivered. The success of this pilot has led to a further 300 laptops being provided by Wiltshire Council ICT. We have completed a procurement exercise to determine the supplier for the refurbishment and we are pleased to say that the contract has been awarded to Byteback. The first 100 have been collected by Byteback and will be returned refurbished in April ready for distribution. We have continued to meet with other potential partners and although they have been incredibly excited by the project they have not been in a position to provide a distribution service. We are currently exploring other opportunities as to how we can better target vulnerable families, and those with a disability.

## **Digital Literacy**

In January 2014, a new Wiltshire Online computer club was launched in Bradford on Avon. The club runs every Monday afternoon in the town library, providing local people with the opportunity to get free support with the basics of computers, tablets and the internet. Learners can either bring their own equipment, or use one of the computers provided. The club is run by the Wiltshire Online volunteer coordinator for Bradford on Avon, with support from his team of local digital champion volunteers. At the end of January, Wiltshire Online launched its partnership with Job Centre Plus, Chippenham. We now have one of our digital champion volunteers attending the Job Centre one morning per week to support job seekers, who have either no, or very poor IT skills and are keen to learn how to access the Government Gateway, use Universal Jobmatch, word process a CV and more. This partnership has proved very successful and the Job Centre is keen to extend our work to other centres across Wiltshire.

February saw the launch of an exciting new partnership with Chippenham Rotary Club. Wiltshire Online has successfully supported Rotary to set up a free computer club in the heart of Chippenham, by providing the Rotarians with digital champion training as well as advice and guidance on how to run a successful club. Our volunteer coordinator for the Chippenham area continues to help manage the flow of learners attending the club.

Our team of volunteers is continuing to grow. To date, we have more than 80 digital champions providing free, one-to-one computer support in various community areas across the county. January also saw a refresh of our partnership with Devizes School, when the Wiltshire Online team trained another group of 15 sixth form students to become digital champions. These young people are now providing support at Wiltshire Online's Devizes Computer Club under the direction of an adult volunteer.

Finally, Wiltshire Online's digital literacy programme has recently featured in a national publication by Carnegie UK Trust, showcasing our work and proving that we are leaders in this field. The publication can be accessed here: <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/2014/making-digital-real>

For more information about how you can support the digital literacy project in your area please contact Jenny Wilcockson on 01225 793 349.

## **GWB Broadband rollout**

In January 2014 our third community announcement was made that detailed the next set of communities that would benefit from the rollout by end of summer 2014.

In March 2014, a 'Where and When' map was published on the Wiltshire Online website to provide residents with information about the planned rollout. However, in an effort to share as much information as we are able, we are currently working on a postcode checker which is due to be available in May 2014. The postcode checker will advise residents where they are in the rollout and will be updated on a weekly basis with information on cabinets as they become ready for service.

Some of our earliest communities are now live, such as Royal Wootton Bassett, and the team is working with our communications department on a press announcement for May to advertise the improved website and promote the cabinets that are ready for service.

## **Superfast Broadband Business Support:**

Peninsula Enterprise, in partnership with Business West, are offering fully funded support to help ambitious businesses in Wiltshire identify, maximise and profit from the opportunities that superfast  
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broadband and new technologies present. *More than 1,500 eligible businesses in Wiltshire are set to benefit from a £1 million investment from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Wiltshire Online to help them exploit new digital technologies enabled by faster broadband.*

Visitors to the Knowledge Hub - <http://www.superfastbusiness.co.uk/> - are increasing with more than 2000 users registered on the site. More than 80 referrals across the south west region have been raised as a result of businesses accessing the eligibility checker.

Free events continue to be held on a monthly basis across the county which eligible businesses are invited to attend – these events cover a host of topics focused on maximising business potential through the exploitation of digital technologies.

### **MIP (Mobile Infrastructure Project)**

Research of site areas is continuing throughout the UK by the approved supplier Arqiva with Harlequin. Potential sites have been identified in Wiltshire, however further investigation is required in terms of accessibility to power, line of site and cost before commitment can be made to the sites they will proceed with. Continued contact is being maintained with Arqiva and Harlequin to understand the current status.

More information is expected in the autumn.

### **General queries**

The Wiltshire Online website ([www.wiltshireonline.org](http://www.wiltshireonline.org)) is intended to be the first port of call for any member of the public. We will regularly update the website throughout the course of the programme.

Marie Nash  
Project Officer, Programme Office  
Wiltshire Online