

North Skye Broadband Steering Group Meeting No 9

3rd of December 2015, HIE Offices Portree – 18:00

Minutes

Present

Roy Bennet, Charles McCrimmon, James Caldwell, Nick Duffill, Geoff Semler, Moira Scobbie, Robin Crorie, Alastair Nicholson, Elgar Finlay, Niall Till

Apologies were received from Hugh Ross

Previous minutes were accepted with correction, proposed by Roy Bennet, Seconded by Geoff Semler

Declaration of Interest

None

HIE Progress

State Aid document complete, Postcode Spreadsheet property count disputed, though funding is not per property.

2 Cabinets currently installed in UIG for Openreach Superfast

Funding for Project Management work should be approved by next week.

Actions from Previous minutes

Farrpoint dates for Jan 2016 (ITT workshop)

KML Files sent to Geoff.

Comments on Consultation document received and discussed in meeting

CBB conference pending.

Niall's high level concept document presented at meeting, comments were expected by Friday 11th of December.

Robin's company structure's document pending, expected Thursday 10th

PR document completed by PR Sub-group, proposed Charles, Seconded Jim

Interviews held, Contract work offered to Elgar Finlay Ltd, with provisionally agreed terms subject to funding.

Actions

Community Broadband Conference report, Elgar Finlay

Possible company structures document, Robin

Booking of Farrpoint for ITT Workshop

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Discussions within Meeting

Postcode property count Inaccuracies and their effect on the funding outcome.

Funding cap effectively capped at £1.4 million, less than the initial amount banded around of £1.6 million.

Anything raised over the 11% would be removed from the funding from CBS.

Initial funding covered any item that could be capitalised.

Interview process discussed, explanation of chosen contract method was provided. Statement provided by interviewers to be included in the public record.

“Roy and I conducted interviews on Tuesday 24th. In total there were half a dozen or so expressions of interest (one from Australia!). In the end there were only three that we interviewed. We created a “marking card” based on the criteria in the job spec, and used this as the primary but not sole basis on which to make a decision.

All of the candidates had different attributes and two of them were probably more suited to a role in the build or operational phases of the project more so than this phase, so although we have decided not to offer the post to them we have asked if we can retain their details and perhaps call them at a later date. In addition to this there was a further expression of interest from someone staying at the North End who did not want to be a candidate at this stage but expressed an interest in possibly taking on any overload we have and perhaps helping with the technical evaluation of the ITT when the time comes. Again we have retained his details.

We also considered whether to offer the work package as an employed post or as a contracted scope, and decided it would be better for NSB at this stage to offer it as a contracted scope. To this end, we have provisionally offered the work package to Elgar Finlay Ltd, and we have provisionally agreed terms. Obviously this is all subject to funding being available from HIE” - Geoff Semler (Director)

PR and Branding discussions, Elgar beginning to source branding and visible presence materials. Initial budget of £5K for Branding, stationary, design, website and logo.

The SG made the point that they considered the accuracy of the number of residences in the consultation document might be significantly out. AN stated this was not an issue and would not impact the validity of the consultation process.

AN stated the only way things (post codes) will be removed from our scope is if another entity has a firm commitment to deliver Faster Broadband to that post code in the next 3 years.

AN stated that No post codes would be formally removed from the BT scope until we are funded and have a business plan. The SG noted that this leaves us exposed to BT cherry picking codes between now and then, should they chose to do so.

AN stated that contrary to our understanding funding would probably not go up from £1.4M. This came as a major shock to the group as it was our understanding that funding would be in the region of £1000 per residence. This fundamentally changes the whole funding model from NSB's perspective. The assumption to date has been that we would only need to raise 11% of the capital and any other funding would be operational funding or borrowing. This revelation meant NSB

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may need to raise considerably more than the 11% in order to fund the capital element of the project . It was noted using the £1000 per residence model, this could be in the region of an additional £1M+. GMS stated that if this were the case, then NSB would not accept any reduction in the level of funding in the event we were able to raise more than the 11% minimum.

AN indicated that there are some 120,000 residences in the CBS scope and outside the BT plan in Scotland.

£5K branding/website budget was an estimated number mentioned by EF, although it was noted that that amount had not been discussed or approved by the board.

GMS placed on record the SG`s thanks to Nigel Redfern who did a lot of work behind the scenes managing the whole recruitment process for us and to those that assisted in the preparation of the job spec. and advert.

Secretary Post

Secretary post is still unfilled.

AOB

Eilidh Ross MacLellan accepted position on board and has now been appointed as a director for NSB