

Super-Connected Cities programme

Options for Wireless Connectivity

July 2013

This note is for the attention of suppliers with an interest in the wireless element of the Super Connected Cities Programme (SCCP). It gives a description of the wireless options within the SCCP and the activity suppliers can expect to see from SCCP cities over the coming months.

Wide-spread, fast and high-quality wireless connectivity is a key ambition of the £150 million Super-Connected Cities Programme (SCCP).

There is an opportunity now to accelerate the deployment of high-speed and consistent wireless services in city centres through targeted interventions. Over the past few months DCMS has worked through a process of identifying and analysing the options that SCCP cities can use to support this ambition and has identified the three wireless options described below. These options have been designed to work with the grain of the market and have been deployed in the UK before. Each SCCP city has determined which of these options it wishes to pursue in its project, based on the specific outcomes it is looking to achieve. The three options are:

Wireless Concession Contract

Under this option, the City authority grants an operator the right to use City authority assets to provide a wireless communications network and receives payments (fees and revenues) in return. The assets are usually street furniture (i.e. lampposts, CCTV, traffic lights etc.) and buildings. City authorities have been provided with guidance on structuring wireless concession contracts so as not to impede any existing wireless deployment initiatives which may already be underway in their cities. Of the SCCP cities, 21 are considering a wireless concession contract of some form.

Hot Spots in Public Buildings

This option is focused on the establishment of wireless technologies within public buildings, to provide wireless connectivity for members of the public within the buildings, as opposed to outside. Examples include Council buildings, museums, libraries and health centres. A hot spot is a site that offers internet access over a wireless local area network (WLAN) through the use of a router connected to a link to an internet service provider. Hot spots typically use Wi-Fi technology, but DCMS has recommended that City authorities adopt a technology neutral approach. By focusing on the desired outcomes it allows suppliers to introduce innovation or alternative technologies if appropriate. Currently 16 SCCP cities plan to install hot spots in public buildings.

Transport Services

This option provides for the implementation of improved wireless connectivity on public transport services focused within city centres such as buses and trams, where the service cost is less than the De minimis threshold for State aid and/or the transport service is publically owned and operated. Offering improved wireless connectivity on transport services increases the attractiveness of city centres to visitors, businesses and residents and promotes economic growth, as well as supporting environmental initiatives and assisting in the reduction of traffic congestion. Eight SCCP cities are presently considering wireless transport services projects.

DCMS has recently communicated to cities to approve the plans they wish to progress through the SCCP. The three options above will all be implemented by some of the cities. Over the next few months you should expect requests from cities to engage on these options and then tenders to follow.

If you have any questions with regards to the wireless element of SCCP, or more generally about the programme, please contact us via urbanbroadbandfund@culture.gsi.gov.uk.



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