

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION RECORD

The following decision was taken on 19 March 2020 by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety.

Date notified to all members:

The end of the call-in period is 4:00 pm on 25 March 2020

Unless called-in, the decision can be implemented from

1. **TITLE**

Administration of an Internet Voucher Scheme

2. **DECISION TAKEN**

That approval be given to administer the allocation of vouchers for an Internet Voucher Scheme that will provide 12 month's free internet access for the residents of up to 10% of dwellings in council housing blocks across 25 sites.

3. **Reasons For Decision**

It is recommended that Sheffield City Council administers the allocation of vouchers for a scheme to be operated by a fibre-to-the-building Internet Service Provider (ISP) that will provide 12 month's free internet access for the residents of up to 10% of dwellings in council housing blocks across 25 sites.

The value of the free service is almost £300. The scheme could enable up to 540 households to improve the quality of their lives and to take advantage of the socio-economic benefits of being online.

4. **Alternatives Considered And Rejected**

Option 1: Hyperoptic Ltd provides a basic free of charge internet service to any resident that requests one. Hyperoptic declined to provide this service because it believed that a basic 2Mbps would not be fit for purpose, providing a poor quality service that would lead to negative feedback from residents and reputational damage to its brand.

Option 2: Hyperoptic Ltd provides a lower cost, rather than free of charge, higher quality free of charge service to any resident that requested one. Hyperoptic declined to provide this service because in August 2019 it took a strategic decision to cease promotion of its 'Fibre Lite Service'. This service costs £9/month and provides a 5Mbps download speed. Hyperoptic believes that basic levels of service such as this are no longer fit for purpose, providing a poor quality service that would lead to negative feedback from residents and reputational damage to its brand.

Option 3: Hyperoptic Ltd provide only paid for services. Hyperoptic Ltd is under no obligation to provide a free of charge internet access scheme in Sheffield. The Council could choose to decline the scheme proposed. However, this option was rejected as it would deny up to 540 families the chance to have high quality, free of charge internet access for 12 months, valued at almost £300 per voucher.

5. **Any Interest Declared or Dispensation Granted**

6. **Respective Director Responsible for Implementation**
Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods Service

7. **Relevant Scrutiny Committee If Decision Called In**
Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee