IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE PUBLIC WIFI IN RYEDALE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S MARKET TOWNS

Marked as confidential - exempt item due to commercial sensitivity

Background

Most mobile phones can access the internet but free public Wi-Fi provision is still important for local retail and visitor strategies, especially in small towns. Both residents and visitors want to remain connected, they are checking their emails, researching attractions, looking up local events, loading maps, and checking out local restaurant reviews. Visitors in particular want to share everything online. They post photos and videos to Instagram, they Facebook their friends, they check in and brag about their adventures, maybe they even blog or tweet. That's the new kind of word-of-mouth, it's advertising and it's good to be part of it. For some rural areas, the number one reason people visit may be to see family, meaning staying in touch with work is even more important.

An excerpt from the Association of Town and City Management website article on Public Wi-Fi states:

> *In our increasingly digital age, people use...and expect...social media and the internet on the go. Free Wi-Fi coverage in a town centre can really help residents and tourists connect with each other and stay in touch with local events, while local businesses can benefit from the added attraction of free Wi-Fi and the potential advertising derived from it.*

> *Many businesses in your town centre, particularly cafes, pubs and hotels, probably offer free Wi-Fi already to attract customers, but also because their customers expect it. The same could be said for town centres. Developing a 'bricks & clicks' environment can really add another layer of interaction between a town centre and its users; as getting online is now becoming an important part of the shopping experience, developing a local website or Wi-Fi portal for people to login via provides another advertising opportunity for local services to connect with people.*

> *Source http://www.100ways.org.uk/public-wi-fi.html*

Ryedale's market towns suffer from a lack of good consistent mobile coverage for every type of network and it is deemed that a co-ordinated strategy of access to public Wi-Fi in Ryedale is of current importance and warranted further investigation.

Further to a meeting of the Ryedale's Five Town Councils in November 2015, and at the Ryedale Market Towns Promotion group, Ryedale District Council, in partnership with the town councils of Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside, Malton, Norton-on-Derwent and Pickering sought the market to attract quotes for the design and delivery of a Free Public WI-FI scheme in specified parts of the town centres.

The objective was to identify a high quality, user-friendly, reliable solution that will provide flexibility for future expansion if required. The requested provision focussed on selected areas of the five town centres only at this stage, but the solution had to be capable of expansion if the need arises.

The follow scheme requirements were set out to the prospective bidders:

- It is envisaged that the landing page for the scheme will be used as advertising space for the respective towns. Each town would feature an individual landing page to promote current events, local amenities and businesses through sponsorship. It would also need to include data capture of user details which could then be used for e-marketing via other methods. Suppliers were asked to provide costs for the design, management, hosting and maintenance of this portal, including cost (i) to provide 24hr technical support for end users of the WIFI system and (ii) administration costs associated with managing the advertising content of the Landing Page.
- Providing free internet access to end users which can be controlled/ limited by duration and/or bandwidth by the respective councils.
- Support the use of laptop computers, tablets and smart phones, regardless of the Operating System or Web Browser
- Should allow seamless roaming across hotspots / access points
- Allow for different Internet connection speeds for certain Wi-Fi networks
- Support the enforcement of a limit on the number of times the same end user can access the service and/or bar/access control device access to certain networks
- Provide facilities for allowing Councils (Town and District) to communicate with end users of the service (i.e. for the promotion of events and offers)
- Provide usage reports which can be customised and scheduled daily, weekly and monthly.
- Allow for the provision of additional businesses to provide WIFI within their own premises linking seamlessly to the outdoor scheme [at their own cost].

The **minimum area** the scheme should cover is outlined in the following maps:

Proposed area to be covered in Kirkbymoorside Town Centre
Coverage includes: Market Place

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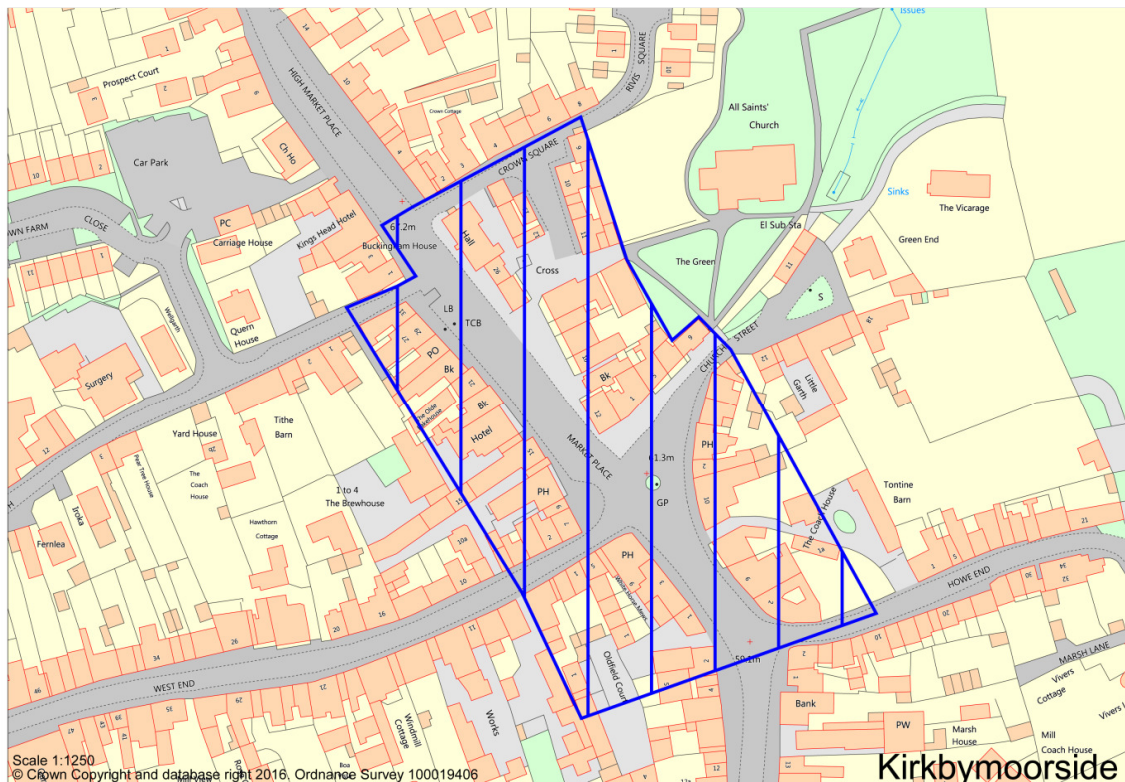
Quotes Submitted

In total, four providers submitted a quote for the project of which the most expensive were priced at £53,950 and £217,690.78 respectively. These two proposals were excluded from the exercise after they were scored against recommended criteria, leaving two quotes to be reviewed. A summary of the remaining two schemes can be found below and a copy of their full submissions can be found attached.

Full site surveys of the areas to be covered were completed and the proposed locations for access point equipment can be found in their proposals.

With both proposals the district and town council's would have joint responsibility for assisting in the gaining of planning consent for each proposed location, assistance with work permits for working at the proposed sites with a cherry picker (or scissor lift) and gaining the relevant permissions from the premises owners.

Option 1 Summary of costs:

Kirkbymoorside Town Centre – cost of provision, one year's management and ongoing annual maintenance costs (ex VAT)	£1800 to build £180/ annum to manage including 1st year maintenance. On going maintenance at cost after 1st year at approx £120 per call out plus parts
TOTAL (ex VAT) for provision to all 5 Market Towns	Build - £15800 Annual Costs - £1560 Plus backhaul costs up to £500/site

Option 2 Summary of costs:

Kirkbymoorside Town Centre – cost of provision, one year's management and ongoing annual maintenance costs (ex VAT)	£3318.30 (remainder of 2016) 2017 onwards £586.60
TOTAL (ex VAT) for provision to all 5 Market Towns	Build - £21,851.81 Annual Costs 3715.13

Next Steps

Currently there is no budgetary provision for this project available from Ryedale District Council however the allocation of capital costs could be reviewed if this scheme is deemed valuable to the respective town councils. Both solutions require a budget provision for on-going maintenance and associated costs should be factored in to the town council's contribution towards the project. As identified in each proposal, there are methods in which to attract funding to cover these costs such as sponsorship from local businesses.

The town councils would be responsible for the on-going internet service charges for each town (1 x internet connection proposed for each town) any running costs of the hardware at the proposed premises and any other permits required that is not covered in the quotes received.

The costs associated with each town are not considered to be based on a collective agreement and therefore if each town agrees to using the same provider it is possible that

further negotiation with the selected provider could take place to bring the overall costs down.

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