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Welcome

This brochure has been designed to describe in outline the current status of the Welsh Public Sector Broadband Aggregation (PSBA) activity and the delivery of what we believe to be one of the worlds first Next Generation Networks built to service the combined needs of all public sector bodies on a national scale.

One Wales, one network

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) networks are fundamental to the delivery of modern Public Services across the world. They are the lifeblood of government, carrying the crucial information that enables services to be effectively delivered to citizens – linking people, buildings and information through the media of voice, video and data.

Traditionally, Public Sector organisations have built networks that provide these services to buildings and employees using many suppliers and many technologies to achieve their goal.

Now the focus is on the next step in this journey: convergence of these services, the use of Internet Protocol (IP), the Internet itself, broadband and mobile services.

The coming years represent a true watershed for the key ICT networks supporting health, education, government and local services in Wales. For the first time we will see a single communications and information transport platform capable of aggregating demand for high-speed connectivity across different sectors – and leveraging the current ICT infrastructure and the knowledge contained within it for the benefit of some three million citizens and 300,000 public sector employees. This new platform is called 'The PSBA Network'.

Building on the experiences and expertise gained through operating existing Public Sector networks, this asset will ensure that the Welsh Assembly Government's vision for Welsh public services: Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services in Wales becomes a reality.



The power of collaboration

The PSBA project has been a major collaboration activity across the Welsh Public Sector starting in 2004. This has resulted in the creation of The PSBA Partnership which is the name that is applied to all of the Public Sector bodies who are financing and using The PSBA Network. The PSBA Network Supplier, Logicalis (UK) Ltd are also part of this partnership.

Please read on to explore the background, history, rationale and exciting potential of this innovative network partnership.



Local Government

Unitary Authority Networks

Unitary Authorities across Wales have built and evolved their own corporate voice, video and data networks for many years in order to reach the buildings that fall within their responsibility – as well as investing in mobile communications to support employees on the move.

Authorities have traditionally built their own multimedia networks for the specific and ever-changing needs of their users. While every authority has its own unique requirements, they also share much common ground in the way networks are being built – with features like security, resilience and the ubiquitous nature of broadband.

Schools

The face of education in Wales is changing, with more schools than ever now connected. Most obviously, pupils now literally have a world of information at their fingertips thanks to the power of the Internet.

But this is just the start. In fact, schools are now using everything from electronic whiteboards to video conferencing to enable pupils and teachers to communicate with each other remotely.

Teachers can collaborate to develop and share resources, gain access to school management information, and even track pupils' progress and provide feedback.

ICT Learning Centres

ICT Learning Centres provide an important bridge between schools and community-based learning, giving everyone – children, adults, and entire families – a range of services, as well as Internet access.

Libraries

Wales was the first country in the UK to provide free public access to computers and the Internet in all public libraries. Now, the people of Wales visit the library nearly 15 million times every year.

A communication platform which is enabling the drive toward entirely new, more efficient ways of teaching, learning, accessing and sharing knowledge – all of which adds up to better services for the people of Wales.

Health

NHS Wales Networks

For nearly 20 years now the NHS Digital All-Wales Network has been the technology foundation of NHS Wales, carrying all voice, data and video communication over a single network.

The use of new video techniques and technologies will have a radical impact on the quality of life for patients with long-term conditions, as well as reduce the amount of time they spend in hospital.

The use of the Internet is also being exploited by NHS Wales. Clinical professionals working from home, have the ability to access key information using secure broadband.

Primary Care and Secondary Care

NHS Wales currently has all of its GP practices and branch surgeries directly connected to the NHS All-Wales network.

The 15 NHS trusts in Wales have at least one major connection to this core infrastructure. In addition, they operate and manage their own local network reaching out to each and every trust location.

At a higher level, NHS Wales is connected to many NHS UK structures to ensure communication across the three home countries.

For NHS Wales, among other things, The PSBA Network can be an enabler for more effective co-operation and co-ordination across sectors. By extending aggregation, effective connectivity between health, social and education services can be further developed to support multi-agency working, building on the progress that has been made to date.



Higher and Further Education

Advances in networking technology have provided access to a wealth of online learning resources and repositories; while new network applications including email, video-conferencing, instant messaging, and blogging have helped to connect geographically dispersed research groups.

Existing HE and FE Networks

Within Wales, the higher education institutions and further education colleges' have autonomous control over the development and operations of their own institutional local (campus) and wide area (multi-campus) networks.

Until fairly recently, interconnect and Internet access requirements were provided by two separate wide-area networks in North and South Wales.

Each regional network was effectively an extension of JANET® – The UK's education and research network connecting higher education institutions, further education colleges, research councils, specialist colleges, and adult & community learning providers.

Applications and Projects

The Welsh Video Network project has fast become one of the largest studio-based IP video-conferencing facility in Europe with every HE and FE institution across Wales hosting at least one studio capable of holding multipoint conferences at virtual television broadcast quality video and audio.

Specialist Research

Thanks to their high-bandwidth capability, these networks are enabling research institutions to consume huge volumes of data on subjects ranging from physics and engineering, to satellite image processing, computer science and health science.



The Wider Community

National Assembly for Wales

The network that supports Assembly Members (AMs) business across Wales is small but significant to the efficient running of the legislative body for Wales. In addition to the major sites, services are provided to members' constituency offices to ensure they are fully connected.

Welsh Assembly Government

The executive body responsible for Government in Wales supports nearly three million people in Wales and has a large telecommunications network that allows information to be shared between people and departments in a secure manner

Telephony services are provided for approximately 6000 Civil Servants and a dedicated video conferencing solution connects multiple sites, minimising costly travel time and enabling a lower carbon footprint to be attained.

Emergency Service Networks

While business usage is important, the networks underpinning 'blue-light' services are critical.

Today, Wales has a blend of devolved and non-devolved services across its Ambulance, Police, Fire and Coastguard segments, often with highly specific operational requirements, including uses of advanced wireless technologies such as Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA).

Other Organisations

There are many other public sector organisations across Wales. All have information and communications needs. Many have their own networks. These include organisations such as: -

- The National Parks Authority
- The Countryside Commission for Wales
- The Museums Service
- Traffic Wales
- Environment Wales
- Voluntary sector organisations

The goal is clear: to increase the quality and quantity of information sharing across public service organisations in Wales and deliver a better service to its people.

Taking the next step

When it comes to the implementation and usage of technology, Wales is clearly punching above its weight.

However, the one overriding challenge for the country is to somehow retain the ability to connect and integrate disparate networks in a way that is secure, flexible, cost effective, and continues to improve the lives of the Welsh people.

The next generation of IP-enabled services – whether medical diagnosis by video or teaching children in virtual classrooms – will require powerful and, most importantly, high-speed functionality.

Now, this is becoming a reality in the form of The PSBA Network that provides the true platform for all information sharing in Wales, aggregated to deliver super-fast Internet speeds and the minimal possible cost – giving the Welsh taxpayer the best possible service and value for money.

Aside from saving money, the network will provide a range of other benefits, driving productivity and Quality of Service through the ability to enable increased and improved data sharing between different government departments and even the delivery of shared services.

Initially, during 2008 this network will encompass the communications requirements for up to 1,000 sites across Wales with speeds ranging from 2Mbps to 2.5Gbps. It will have the potential to expand to 5,500 sites.

It will touch every corner of public services, from local government to health, education, emergency services and the Welsh Assembly Government – and of course the public themselves, who will increasingly be given the opportunity to obtain services that can improve their quality of life.

A joined up Public Service

When all's said and done, technology is merely a means to an end – and the new Welsh network is no different in the sense that it is an enabler.

In 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government published its flagship paper on Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services in Wales.

The paper outlines the future vision for public services nationwide: Principally that of a joined up Wales with coordinated and cohesive service delivery.

The communications and information network now being developed will not only make that vision a reality, but will also provide a foundation upon which future services can be integrated and delivered to the public sector and the Welsh people.

Delivery and integration

It is a fact that technology doesn't stand still. Systems, and networks that do the job today, won't be sufficient in the years ahead.

Ultimately, those working in the public services need the best possible tools to do their jobs - which is why a single, flexible and scalable platform is so critical.

To make this vision a reality, the coming years will involve a concerted effort to work with partners across all relevant public services to gradually replace older networks of the NHS in Wales, the Higher and Further Education sector and those which serve Unitary Authorities.

Similarly, other public sector contracts that expire on existing wide area networks over the coming months and years will have the opportunity to connect to the PSBA.

However, the advanced information and communications network and its benefits will not be limited to these sectors. Collaboration with everyone from the National Parks Authorities to Fire and Rescue Services will help support improvement to services to millions of people, enabling a whole range of public organisations to share information and work together in a more effective partnership.

Benefits

The most immediate benefit of a single network is the drastic reduction in broadband costs across public services in Wales – which of course means placing less of a burden on the taxpayers' pocket.

By consolidating effort and expenditure into a single technology platform managed by a single network integrator, Wales will realise enormous productivity gains.

No longer will dozens of individual sectors each need to procure and purchase their own wide area networking services. Instead, everyone will be using a technology platform built from common infrastructural elements.

Furthermore the cost of procuring the many services offered through the network will be reduced simply due to the much larger volumes and subsequent economies of scale.

The secondary benefits will in all likelihood take longer to realise, being dependent on a variety of other projects, initiatives and departments.

However, the goal is clear: to increase the quality and quantity of information sharing across public service organisations in Wales and deliver a better service to its people.

Video conferencing is one example of this - where professionals from different sectors and geographies could join forces to deliver improved quality of service at a minimum cost.

Local aggregation and indeed network design services could also be consolidated to provide improved integration, access and collaboration.

Funding

A project of this scale involves significant investment –which is precisely why costs for all components of the network will be extremely transparent.

Specifically, these include:

- The building and management of broadband services and interconnection to other networks.
- Providing customer support, fault resolution and service management.
- The procurement of connectivity services (i.e., availability, bandwidth, resilience and security) from the telecoms marketplace.

Migration to The PSBA Network is already underway. For some sectors and organisations, the initial order has already been placed – for others this is imminent. In either case, rest assured support and advice is on hand to help you in the decision-making process.

Who precisely will pay?

All our partnering sectors have contributed towards a single, pooled budget to provide the core infrastructure for the project.

This infrastructure includes elements that are common to everyone, including the development and deployment of the network itself, support services such as a help-desk; along with service portal, service monitoring, reporting, billing and technical design support.

Governance

This project is being governed extremely stringently by a strategy board; a management board; an operation and service delivery team; a technical design authority; and a change advisory board. Furthermore, partnering sectors will have extra governance measures in place.

A core team within the Welsh Assembly Government will manage the various activities and interactions between Logicalis the supplier and sector clients, including core build and development; service management; compliance and quality of service; and security accreditation.

By consolidating effort and expenditure into a single technology platform managed by a single network integrator, Wales will realise enormous productivity gains.

The PSBA Network Supplier

In 2007, The Welsh Assembly government awarded a £74 million, seven year contract to Logicalis to provide the public sector in Wales with a unique, unified, high bandwidth ICT network – The PSBA Network.

Logicalis is an international provider of integrated ICT solutions, delivering secure, converged computing and communications infrastructure and services. Logicalis has achieved independent certification for its integrated management system, information security, IT service management offerings and its environmental standards: ISO 9001; ISO 27001; ISO 20000 and ISO14001 respectively.

Under the contract Logicalis provide the design, deployment, integration and management of The PSBA Network. Logicalis PSBA operations are based from their offices in Nantgarw near Cardiff.

Delivering better services

In 2008 The PSBA Network started to provide high-speed connectivity for education in Wales, serving schools, libraries, ICT learning centres and the unitary authorities' own corporate offices.

The PSBA Network connects Public Sector users across Wales with each other, as well as with other key networks including the Internet – all at high-speed.

All of which means that the network is more than simply a physical network of cables. It's a communication platform which is enabling the drive toward entirely new, more efficient ways of teaching, learning, accessing and sharing knowledge – all of which adds up to better services for the people of Wales.

Everyone in Wales stands to benefit from connected communities that are more involved in learning, better qualified and more highly educated. For individuals, better education leads to greater employability, financial success and richer enjoyment of life. For Wales as a whole, it will lead to a more competitive economy, a more vibrant culture and a healthier society.

Those of us working in the public sector will gain, too, from the many ways in which broadband is enabling better communication between the citizens of Wales and our local and national governments – all of which adds up to the provision of better services at lower cost.





Contacts for 'The PSBA Network' and 'The PSBA Partnership'

The activities taking place to deliver The PSBA Network are continually being updated, therefore for the latest information we encourage you to visit the PSBA website at www.PSBA.org.uk

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All information was correct at the time of going to press.
Please always check with us for updates.



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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