



Growth Fund

Super Connected Cities Programme – Wifi in Public Buildings (Hotspots)

Oxford City understands the need to keep up with what's happening in the global markets. To attract investment it is essential to have the best connections and the "Super Connected Cities Programme" supported by the nationally recognised BDUK Programme through the Department of Culture Media and Sport is helping to achieve this. The £340k from the Growth fund to install [WiFi Hotspots in Public Buildings](#) around Oxford forms part of a much larger package that has seen WiFi delivered on Public Transport, and a planned wireless concession and voucher scheme to help businesses get connected. This was achieved in Oxford by its own programme "Super Connected Oxford" run by Oxford City Council and was one of just 22 cities chosen to benefit from this funding.

Negotiations started in 2013 and the first wireless hotspots were put into the Ashmolean Museum; Museum of Natural History; Pitt Rivers Museum and the Museum of History and Science, all world class museums that together attract an estimated 4 million visitors per year and support academic learning at the highest level in Oxford. This was followed by the Visitor Information Centre in Broad Street and the Oxfordshire History Centre where work was completed by March 2015. There are now 40 hotspots and 150 aerials dotted around the museums, galleries and public spaces adding to the visitor experience, a real boost to the visitor economy.

Putting WiFi in Public Buildings was just part of the programme, funding was also given to put new technology into the Public Transport Hubs. All Park and Rides surrounding Oxford in the "Smart Zone" now have free Wi-Fi and the Wi-Fi on the buses was made possible with additional private funding from the Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach who understood the competitive advantage of installing for its passengers.

Businesses in Oxford City also benefited from the scheme and were able to apply for vouchers worth up to £3k to install WiFi in their premises. Although uptake was slow in 2014, thanks to support from OxLEP and BDUK the scheme was extended in early 2015 to the whole OxLEP economic area within Oxfordshire. This was great news for those businesses around Oxfordshire who had not previously been able to apply and can now benefit from this great opportunity. Many businesses have been able to pool requirements to have fibre cables installed, meeting the scheme criteria, including State Aid rules and achieving approval from BDUK.

Sebastian Johnson who has helped manage the programme has been chairing a partnership board alongside OxLEP, university, local authority and business representatives with “Smart City” aspirations and sees a future where there will be first class wireless connections across the city, indeed another call for bids is expected in the autumn of 2015 to ensure this happens. The next year will transform Oxford City and ensure that it is every bit as good as its competitors. Information will be available at the touch of a button through any mobile device be it a mobile, tablet or laptop. Great to help attract investment, keep the academic community in touch, and boost the tourism industry as well as benefiting resident’s where a world class digital experience will bring growth and prosperity across the region.

More information can be found on the [Super Connected Oxford](#) webpage