

Broadband Update

On 30 January 2013 Wiltshire Council in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council awarded the contract to British Telecom (BT) to provide superfast [broadband](#).

Over the next three years BT in partnership with Wiltshire and South Gloucestershire Council will ensure that 91% of all premises are able to access superfast broadband and that all premises are able to access a standard broadband service by March 2016.

Background

At present not all areas within Wiltshire have access to broadband with some areas experiencing slow speeds and poor service. This means that many residents and businesses across the county struggle to take full advantage of the internet and online services.

Poor broadband services are seen as a major obstacle to sustained economic growth and investment. Limited access to broadband also restricts individuals and families in accessing online services such as educational activities, communication, entertainment, shopping and paying bills.

The key aims of the Wiltshire Online procurement for superfast broadband are:

- A minimum of 91% or more of premises being able to access superfast broadband i.e. over 24Mbps
- All premises to have access to a minimum broadband service of [2Mbps](#)

The investment

The total investment for the Great Western Broadband ([GWB](#)) programme is £35.6 million with £4.6 million from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), £2 million from South Gloucestershire Council, £15.5 million from Wiltshire Council, £12.8 million from BT and £0.74 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

This level of investment will ensure that all premises in Wiltshire will be able to access a standard broadband service and at least 91% are expected to access superfast broadband.

Connecting up our most rural areas will be one of the challenges we face as upgrading the network in these areas may require new infrastructure.

The network has been designed to provide the greatest coverage for the investment. The most economical approach is to grow the network from a combination of rural and urban locations. This will involve building out from [exchanges](#) that have already been upgraded, then onto surrounding areas whilst also connecting the smaller exchanges and cabinets along the way. Other designs have been considered, for example connecting very rural areas first followed by larger villages and towns; however, existing infrastructure requires that the work be completed in a specific sequence and adopting this approach would result in a time consuming and costly project, reducing the number of premises that we can target.

Coverage

There are approximately 216,000 premises across Wiltshire (business and residential). Of these approximately 84,000 premises are highlighted as not being able to access superfast broadband, either now or by 2016. These areas are where

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we are able to invest and are identified in the [Broadband Survey Area](#) page on our website.

The remaining premises have access to superfast broadband, either now or by the end of 2014 through the ongoing work of BT and Virgin Media under their commercial plans.

Approximately 11% premises cannot achieve at least a 2Mbps service across Wiltshire. By the end of this project **all** premises will have an access line speed of this minimum service, with most getting speeds well in excess of this.

What happens next?

Following the contract signing, there will be a period of planning and surveying. The 'intervention area' is the where BT Openreach will be surveying and can be viewed on our [Broadband Survey Area](#) page. Once each survey has been completed the roll out will begin in that area. Surveying is expected to start during the autumn of 2013 and the first exchanges enabled under the project are expected to go live with fibre in spring 2014.