

Councillors Briefing Note

No. 276

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Date Prepared: 04 January 2016

Wiltshire Online Programme – Broadband Update

The purpose of this briefing:

- To provide an overview on coverage to date
- Detailed information on the new Universal Service Commitment scheme
- Update on Phase 1, Phase 2
- Signpost to website for more information

Overall coverage

Reviewing our build plans for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 we will reach over 80,000 premises with a fibreservice and well over 70,000 of those will have a Superfast service (over 24 Mbps - megabits per second). This is a significant achievement, as without our investment approx. 40% of all premises across Wiltshire would not be picked up commercially. As a result of the Wiltshire Online programme the number of premises without a fibre broadband service is significantly reduced, however we do acknowledge that we cannot reach every premise at this time. Those yet to appear in any build plans we refer to as our 'hardest to reach'.

We have just launched the scheme to fulfil the Government's Universal Service Commitment as one opportunity for an improved service for the 'hardest to reach'. Ultimately this satellite scheme will only benefit/suit some eligible residents in our 'hardest to reach' areas and a satellite solution may not be their first choice of broadband technology. A satellite broadband solution works in a similar way to satellite TV, a small dish on the premise is used to transmit information. We do not see this as an overall solution for our hardest to reach and as such we continue to explore further opportunities. This includes the gain share clause in the Phase 1 contract; as residents take up the new fibre service funds are generated and reinvested into the contract to build further infrastructure. The first tranche of re-investment will be announced in the spring. We also continue to support our local MPs with regards to the pursuit of additional funding for a Phase 3.

Universal Service Commitment

Overview of scheme

This scheme is intended to deliver the Government's Universal Service Commitment to ensure that homes and businesses have access to download broadband speeds of at least 2Mbps from December 2015.

Under the scheme, residents and businesses which have speeds below 2Mbps will be able to apply for support for a satellite broadband connection. A Government subsidy will be provided to cover most of the cost of installation and commissioning of a satellite broadband service. The applicant will be responsible for paying any remaining cost of installation and commissioning (if any), for choosing the features of the satellite broadband service required, and for paying the monthly subscription for the service. Wiltshire Council will process the applications on behalf of the Government.

Who can apply?

This will depend on whether a premise is currently able to benefit from download speeds in excess of 2Mbps. If it cannot, and that premise is not scheduled to benefit from the delivery of our fibre broadband roll-out in the near future (Phase 1 or Phase 2), then it will be eligible for subsidy.

The application process

A resident or business will be able to apply to benefit from the scheme by completing a simple online application form on our website or over the telephone when required.

The Wiltshire Online team will complete a series of eligibility checks to confirm whether the home or business will feature in the superfast broadband roll out. Based on these checks, we will advise whether or not the premises will be eligible to benefit from this scheme.

If the premise is eligible, the applicant will be provided with an eligibility code and a list of participating satellite service providers.

Implementation process

Once the applicant has received their unique eligibility code, and the list of pre-approved satellite broadband retail service providers currently operating under the scheme, they should review the products and prices available from each provider and select the product that best meets their performance and cost requirements.

The applicant will then need to approach their chosen satellite broadband retail service provider to order the service they require, using the eligibility code provided by Wiltshire Council.

The scheme will cover most or all of the cost of installation and commissioning of the satellite broadband service. The end user will be responsible for paying any remaining cost of installation and commissioning (if any), and paying the monthly subscription for the service selected, including VAT.

Further information

Information about the Universal Service Commitment, the application process and a full FAQ is available on the Wiltshire Online website [here](#).

Phase 1, Phase 2 highlights

- Phase 1 roll out is on schedule and to date has delivered fibre broadband to over 71,000 homes and businesses in Wiltshire.
- We have built over 400 new structures
- The take up of the new service remains higher than expected
- Phase 2 begins in March 2016 and will provide superfast broadband to a further 5,500 premises

General queries

For more information about Phase 1, Phase 2 or the USC the Wiltshire Online website (www.wiltshireonline.org) is intended to be the first port of call. We will regularly update the website throughout the course of the programme. Alternatively please email broadband@wiltshire.gov.uk

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