

Councillors Briefing Note

No. 299

Service : Corporate Services and Programme Office
Further Enquiries to: Marie Nash
Date Prepared: 13/06/2016
Direct Line: (01225) 712617

Wiltshire Online Programme – Extension of the Basic Broadband Commitment Scheme

What is the Basic Broadband Commitment scheme?

This scheme has been designed to provide support to the homes and businesses that are unable to receive broadband speeds in excess of 2 megabits per second (Mbps) and who will not be benefitting from the superfast broadband rollout.

The scheme was previously referred to as the Universal Service Commitment (USC).

Who is eligible for the scheme?

Residents who are unable to receive a service of more than 2Mbps and who are not benefitting from the Wiltshire Online superfast broadband rollout programme are eligible to apply to the scheme.

Why is there a subsidy available?

The subsidy is to provide support for premises which do not have access to broadband speeds of more than 2Mbps at an affordable price; 2Mbps is the minimum speed required to undertake routine activities over the internet. The basic requirement is that premises should not have to pay more than £400 over a 12 month period to access a basic broadband service; this cost represents the monthly charges, installation, hardware and activation costs. The subsidy scheme helps make basic broadband affordable by contributing towards the cost of the equipment and installation.

How does the scheme work?

Eligible residents are provided with a subsidy code which allows residents to gain access to a subsidised broadband connection, with all of the capital costs and at least part of the installation cost paid for. Residents are able to choose from a number of retail service providers and from a variety of packages to suit their budget and needs.

How has the scheme altered?

The scheme was originally launched in December 2015 in line with our contractual commitment to provide a basic broadband service via a satellite solution.

However, Wiltshire Council has been working closely with BDUK since the launch of the scheme and we are pleased to advise that it has now been extended to include alternative technologies. For a list of current suppliers operating in Wiltshire please see Annexe 1.

Opening up the scheme to alternative technologies should see Wiltshire's residents being able to access a wider range of suppliers.

Does the scheme work the same for wireless technologies as with satellite providers?

Yes, the subsidy code can be used in exactly the same way with a wireless provider; the subsidy is used to fund the installation and equipment costs the same as with a satellite solution.

The one difference with the wireless technology is that it can be designed to serve multiple premises and could lend itself to a community based solution.

How do residents apply for the scheme?

Information about the scheme, including a list of participating providers and an online application form, can be found on the Basic Broadband Commitment pages on the Wiltshire Online website: www.wiltshireonline.org

Who do I contact if I have any queries about the scheme?

The Wiltshire Online website (www.wiltshireonline.org) is intended to be the first port of call for information. However, for specific queries, there is a dedicated email address which is broadband@wiltshire.gov.uk

Annexe 1

The following is a list of providers who are currently participating in the Basic Broadband Commitment scheme in Wiltshire:

Wireless Providers:

Wessex Internet - <https://www.wessexinternet.com/>

Satellite Providers:

Avonline - www.avonlinebroadband.com/

Bentley Walker - <http://toowayinfo.bentleywalker.com/bduk/>

Broadband Wherever - www.broadbandwherever.net/home

Corsat - www.corsat.co.uk/bduk/

Digiweb - www.digiweb.com/satellite/

Europasat - www.europasat.com/

ibub Communications - <http://www.ibub.co.uk/satellitescheme/>

Not Spot Broadband - <http://notspotbroadband.com/grant-schemes/>

Prime Satellite Broadband - <http://www.primesatellitebroadband.com/>

Primetech - www.primetech-bduk.co.uk

Rural Broadband - www.ruralbroadband.co.uk/

Satellite Internet - www.satelliteinternet.co.uk/