



## Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. What does GWB stand for?
- A. GWB is the Great Western Broadband project – a partnership between Wiltshire Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Swindon Borough Council to provide superfast broadband to areas where this would otherwise not be commercially viable and a standard broadband service across the whole area.
- Q. So am I guaranteed to get the 2Mbps minimum speed when I run a speed test from my computer?
- A. The councils' project is to install infrastructure that has the capacity to deliver faster broadband services. Internet service providers will use this infrastructure to sell broadband packages (with different advertised speeds) to residents and businesses. The councils' cannot therefore guarantee that the actual throughput speed experienced by residents using the internet will be a minimum of 2Mbps. However, the councils will take great care to ensure that the successful supplier correctly engineers the network to deliver the highest speeds possible with the funding available. There is more information on broadband speeds.
- Q. Who will get improved broadband?
- A. The aim is for a minimum of 85% of premises across the GWB area (90% in each local authority area of Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Swindon) being able to access superfast broadband, over 24Mbps, by 2015 and all other premises to have a minimum access line speed of 2Mbps.
- Q. What technologies will be used to deliver high speed broadband?
- A. Broadband can be delivered through a range of technologies such as fibre optic, wireless and satellite. The exact technologies eventually used to bring enhanced broadband will be decided during the procurement process. We anticipate there may be a need for a mix of technologies to deliver the best value service and ensure that the greatest access to the highest speeds is achieved.
- Q. How much is being invested?
- A. Investment from the government, Wiltshire Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Swindon Borough Council totals over £23million plus investment from the successful contractor.
- Q. Why are the councils investing? Surely the private sector would be much better?
- A. The costs of putting in rural broadband make it less likely to be funded commercially, without this public money backing it. The technological expertise will still need to come from the private sector. Please see below.

Q. What does the final third mean?

A. It has been estimated that the private sector will cover approximately two-thirds of premises with access to superfast broadband by Spring 2014. As you would expect they are delivering this service to areas where they will get the most return for the investment. Typically this is in areas which are more urban, densely populated and closer to main infrastructure routes. The final third is where the private sector will not be deploying superfast broadband infrastructure, and are potentially in scope of public sector investment to assist delivery in these areas.

Q. What is State Aid and why is this project subject to it?

A. The European Commission (EC) requires that local authorities can only use public money to invest in areas where they can demonstrate there is no current, or planned (within the next three years) deployment of either standard or superfast broadband. These are the “white areas” and can also be termed “the target intervention areas”, i.e. those where it is possible to invest with public subsidy. This project will therefore be limited to the “white areas” only which is a legal requirement of the European Commission’s State Aid rules.

Q. What if the exchange that serves my telephone line is beyond the borders of the GWB area?

A. The project covers all homes and businesses in Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Swindon that we don’t expect to be provided with faster broadband without public sector intervention. It doesn’t matter where the exchange is located.

Q. My local exchange has been upgraded by BT, but I cannot receive superfast broadband – will I still benefit from this project?

A. BT and Virgin both currently supply superfast broadband to parts of Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Swindon. When BT announce that they are upgrading an exchange to their Infinity product (fibre to the cabinet, or FTTC) they do not necessarily upgrade all street cabinets, only those that will provide a return on investment to BT (typically 50-85% of street cabinets). There is also an issue of premises served by direct lines (exchange only lines) that do not pass through a street cabinet at all, and so can miss out on receiving the new superfast service.

Where an area is not receiving a superfast broadband service, and there are currently no known announcements of superfast broadband then the area is “in scope” for the Great Western Broadband project.

This includes postcodes served by street cabinets from BT FTTC exchanges where the street cabinet has not been upgraded. The Great Western Broadband procurement has the aim of finding a supplier who will deliver superfast broadband to at least 90% of the project area. This will be defined as the procurement process progresses, and will not be known in detail until the supplier is confirmed and the detailed survey work has been undertaken.

Q. Most people only need about 5Mbps to do what they want to on the internet. Why are you trying to get anything faster?

A. It's true that right now 5Mbps is sufficient for the majority of people to do many of the things they want to use the internet for (e.g. iPlayer, online banking and social networking). However given the speed of technological change over the past 10 years, it is hard to predict what the next 10 years might bring. We need to be ready for that to make sure that we don't get left behind. That's why we are future-proofing our network now.

It is also important our local business can access the fastest and most reliable connections to help develop their business. The internet can provide possibilities such as marketing, online sales and improved processes. An online presence can open up national and even international doors as the internet provides a level playing field and can bridge the gap between small businesses and multi-national corporations. Widespread access to superfast broadband can also open up the possibility of home and flexible working which can be beneficial to both staff and their employers.

BROADBAND SPEED	THIS SPEED IS SUITABLE FOR...
250K to 1.5Mbps	Basic e-mail, web browsing
1.5 to 3Mbps	Streaming music, standard definition video, remote surveillance, telecommuting
3 to 6Mbps	File sharing (small/medium files), internet TV (iPlayer, 4OD etc)
6 to 10Mbps	Online gaming, streaming movies online, instant web page loading
10 to 25Mbps	Telemedicine, remote education, High Definition (HD) internet TV
25 to 50Mbps	HD video surveillance
50 to 100Mbps	Video conferencing (multiple users), remote supercomputing
100Mbps +	Real-time data collection, real-time medical image consultation