

Information

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for County Councillors

From:	Matt Ballard – Service Manager, Economy and Planning
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To:	All County Councillors
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Connecting Devon and Somerset Member briefing

Phase 1 progress

BT have reported that around 27,000 more homes and businesses had been added to the fibre network between January and March 2016. This brings the total to around 280,000 premises capable of connecting with around 230,000 of these able to connect to superfast broadband. The Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme remains on track to meet its own targets by the end of 2016.

The Government's target of 90% superfast broadband coverage by the end of 2016 requires BT to deliver its commercial roll-out on time.

Phase 2 and launch of Open Market Review consultation

BDUK colleagues have advised us that there is a further delay to the state aid notification being approved. BDUK had intended to conclude negotiations in February although as we reported last month, the timeframe had slipped to April. We are now informed that the notification is delayed until June.

We are meeting BDUK officials in London to see how we might fast track CDS and gain a quicker resolution shortly. And in preparation for releasing our Invitation to Tender (ITT), we will be launching our Open Market Review public consultation on 6th April 2016. The consultation will set out our proposed intervention area and will run for a minimum of 30 days.

Wireless Broadband live on Dartmoor

Airband, the wireless broadband contractor for Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, have recently announced that their wireless transmitters are live on South West Dartmoor. Airband are now working with CDS and BDUK to finalise arrangements for their 'wholesale access platform' that will make the service available to a range of internet service providers. This should be concluded in a matter of weeks after which businesses and residents fed by the transmitters can place an order.

Meanwhile work continues at pace to roll out this exciting infrastructure. By the end of April it is expected that over 1,000 premises on Dartmoor will have access to a wireless superfast service. On Exmoor all planning applications have now been submitted and

are going through public consultation. Following this the first connections are expected in the summer.

CDS Broadband Voucher Scheme now open

CDS has committed to ensuring that all businesses and residents can have access to at least 2 Mbps by end of 2016. To support this, the CDS team has set up its own Broadband Voucher Scheme which is now live and processing applications.

Anyone within the CDS area that currently has a broadband speed of less than 2 Mbps can qualify for a voucher for £500 to go towards the installation cost of a new broadband connection. Residents and businesses can choose their supplier from an approved list which includes satellite, wireless and fibre providers; and each solution will guarantee at least 10 Mbps download speed. Further details can be found on the CDS website at: <http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/cds-broadband-voucher-scheme/>

Funding for Ultrafast Broadband

Following the Chancellor's Budget announcement of £14.5m funding for Ultrafast Broadband in the South West, the CDS team is pleased to announce that it has been successful in its bid for funding. The CDS programme is set to receive an extra £4m which will be used to deliver ultrafast broadband speeds of up a minimum of 100 Mbps. The CDS team will now work with BDUK to agree a detailed business plan for the funding which will form part of the phase 2 roll out.

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