

CSW BROADBAND WORK ON EXCHANGE ONLY AREAS

The rollout of fibre broadband across Warwickshire and Solihull is really gathering pace now. At the beginning of March 136 cabinets were live and over 28,000 properties able to connect to the network. For full details visit <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk>

As promised at the start of the project, work has now started on exchange-only lines. These are lines where the copper telephone runs directly to a local exchange. This means that the upgrade is different from the “standard” measures that we have become so used to, where a new fibre cabinet is stood close to the existing copper one.

As there is no copper cabinet with exchange-only lines, this has to be installed, which means that it is necessary to find space to stand two cabinets in close proximity to each other, with the fibre one also requiring power. In some locations this can be tricky, to say the least!

One of the difficulties is knowing which properties will be connected to any new solution. Once an exchange-only area goes live, the CSW Broadband project team hope to be able to advise those properties that are able to benefit from the new service – ideally they would like to be able to tell people in advance that it is coming.

Another issue is that, because of the more complex requirements of such installations, it is more difficult to be certain of the timescales involved. That is part of the reason why a lot of areas that are due for upgrade under Contract 1 are showing as purple on the map and have no timescales attached to them. This denotes that they are due to be connected to the NGA (fibre) network, but there is no clarity about dates or locations, or which technology will be used. Obviously any connection would be subject to survey etc. as with the main part of the rollout. Not all of the purple areas are exchange-only connections, but in all cases there will be further work to be carried out before any degree of certainty can be given about rollout dates.