

How CSW is helping to deliver Project Gigabit's objectives

Back in July 2018, the government published the [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#), which outlined their ambitious plans to provide world-class digital connectivity that is 'gigabit-capable', reliable, long-lasting and widely available across the UK.

The intention was to make the UK a world leader in digital connectivity – increasing our competitiveness, boosting productivity and meeting the future demands of both consumers and businesses.

In March 2021, the UK government unveiled Project Gigabit – the £5bn rollout programme that would help them to achieve these objectives. The aim is to provide gigabit-capable broadband speeds of up to 1000Mbps to at least 85% of UK premises by the end of 2025 and at least 99% by 2030.

About 80% of the nation's gigabit-capable coverage is expected to be achieved by commercial providers through their own deployment build plans. The focus of Project Gigabit, therefore is on improving the connectivity of those final 20% of homes and businesses, where the private sector network builders have no plans to do so. These areas typically being located in the more rural and semi-rural areas of the country.

In England, the Project Gigabit programme is being centrally managed by BDUK (Building Digital UK) who have put Warwickshire and Leicestershire together in a contractable region known as Lot 11. It will be the job of the CSW team to oversee the upgrade of properties not covered by commercial plans in this area.

The first step – before procurements can begin and contracts can be awarded – is to identify precisely which areas of Warwickshire and Leicestershire are not expected to benefit from the build plans of commercial network builders over the next three years. Only once we have the answer to that can we identify where public funding will need to be allocated.

We are currently in the process of helping BDUK to ascertain this information with a view to Lot 11 then going out to tender early next year with the build programme likely to start at the end of 2023.

Of course, the CSW Broadband Project is already delivering on these Project Gigabit objectives and has been for some time. Around 20% of our Contract 2 build and 99% of our Contract 3 build has been delivering gigabit-capable, full fibre solutions to homes and businesses across Solihull and Warwickshire.

We will of course provide you with regular updates on how the Lot 11 procurement and contracting process progresses over the coming months via this newsletter.