

Additional funding announced for CSW Broadband

The Government has announced that additional funding of £3.68m will be made available to take the coverage of superfast broadband to 95% of premises across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. The funding is conditional on being matched. The current £15.47m CSW Broadband contract with BT will achieve superfast coverage to 91% of premises and this funding will enable the project to procure a solution to achieve a further 4% to coverage, which is 95% overall.

In the current economic climate it is not easy to see where the required match funding will come from, but the CSW Broadband team have made applications through the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership for a total of £7.85m from the EU, and we are actively seeking other sources of funding for this important project. They have always said that the current project is just a stepping stone towards the EU target of 100% coverage at 30Mbps. This funding will help to take the superfast coverage even further.

CSW Broadband will be procuring a partner to take the network to 95% superfast coverage, but are a long way from being able to say which areas will benefit. As with the first contract there will be a procurement exercise and the results of that, and the subsequent investigative works, will determine where the network will be rolled out next.

The team are still actively investigating any and all sources of funding to reach the EU 2020 targets of 100% coverage at a minimum of 30Mbps – which is higher than the current superfast speed of 24Mbps!! The Government has already said that it will launch a £10m fund on 17th March for pilot projects to test new ways of delivering high speed broadband. CSW Broadband will work with suitable local companies in developing applications to this fund and, if successful, in trialling the new technologies in our area.