

CONTRACT FOR CSW BROADBAND DELIVERY IS ANNOUNCED

After a lot of hard work on the part of the project team and the Local Broadband Champions, CSW Broadband has agreed a £14.57m deal with BT that will bring superfast broadband (24Mbps or over) to 91% of the area. The remaining 9% will achieve speeds of a minimum of 2Mbps up to 23.9Mbps. That means that everyone should be able to engage in activities such as online banking and shopping, watching BBC iPlayer and carrying out free videoconferencing using Skype.

Businesses will be able to compete in a global marketplace, and employees will be able to work from different locations – or from home. For many in the more rural areas this will be a real step-change and will give greater flexibility in the way that people choose to live their lives, to work or to spend their leisure time.

Now that the contract has been let, BT will commence on-the-ground survey work and a rolling 12-month programme will be announced, with the first installations expected around the turn of the year.

Because of the wealth of data that was provided by the Local Broadband Champions and members of the public the project team was able to negotiate an additional £750,000 funding, which will help to extend the superfast broadband reach still further.

Although 91% of homes and businesses will receive superfast broadband within the next three years, which is a significant achievement, it is recognised that this project is a stepping stone to the European targets for 2020 which state that all premises should be connected at a minimum of 30 Mbps and 50% of premises at 100 Mbps. This will be a major undertaking given that the current targets are extremely challenging. Additional government funds are proposed in the future to enable this to happen and the aim is to increase the fibre footprint as soon as money is available.

Until the physical surveys are completed by BT for each area it will not be possible to say exactly what will be going where, or when, but all information will be given on the project website <http://cswbroadband.org.uk>