

SUPERFAST BROADBAND UPDATE

October 2011

This is the first of a series of newsletters that are intended to give regular updates on the project and to let you know how you can get involved. Please print copies for circulation to those who may not have email, as these are often the very people who would most benefit from being able to access on-line services through faster broadband in the future

Project Update

Since the announcement that the Government was to make £530m available for the provision of superfast broadband in the rural areas there have been a succession of follow-up announcements. We are seeking clarification on a number of issues, but this is the position as we currently understand it.

Funding

The Government is making £4.07m available for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. There is a requirement that this amount should be match-funded from Local Authority capital funds, which is challenging given the current economic climate, although the spend can be spread over a number of years.

Ambition

The Government ambition is to provide a minimum of 2Mbps broadband to all homes and superfast broadband to 90% of people by 2015. Superfast broadband has been clarified to mean at least 24Mbps. Coming behind this is an EU requirement that by 2020, fast broadband coverage at 30Mbps should be available to all EU citizens, with at least half European households subscribing to broadband access at 100Mbps. Clearly this is a significant uplift coming just a short time after the UK targets and this will have implications for the Local Broadband Plan.

Progress

We are still actively collecting data (see below) and hope to submit the Local Broadband Plan to Government in April next year. This document should show how we propose to improve broadband speeds across the whole of the sub-region, not just the rural areas, although it is only the rural areas that will receive Government funding.

What can you do to help?

How good is your broadband?

A key component of your Local Broadband Plan will be evidence of where specific problems exist across the sub-region. We therefore have to map this information and in order to do that we need your help.

If you have not already done so please complete the broadband survey that is located at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/superfastbroadband - there is one survey for domestic use and one for business use, so if you run a business or work from home please do both – and encourage your neighbours to do it as well because the more people that respond from a given area the higher priority it will be.

How close can fibre get to your property?

A (usually) simple way to improve broadband speeds is to put fibre to the BT cabinet. This is a green box by the side of the road which provides telecoms to a village or group of properties. We need to map the exact locations of these boxes so that we can establish what benefits might be gained from this type of upgrade.

Please register the location of your BT cabinet and any others you may come across. You can do this at <http://4sfb.crowdmap.com/> and there is also an App for iPhone or Android so that you can do it whilst you are out and about!

Further updates will be issued monthly (or more regularly if necessary)

For more information about the project:

please visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/superfastbroadband

or email: econdev@warwickshire.gov.uk