

May 2022



Cllr David Howes
the Executive Member for
Rural Communities & Localism

Newsletter

Superfast Northamptonshire

Message from Councillor David Howes

I am pleased to present the first of many regular updates on the 'Superfast Northamptonshire' broadband project and to update you about progress on the roll out of fast and reliable broadband to residents and businesses in the area.

In today's society fast broadband is critical and viewed by many as the fourth utility. So much of what we do today relies on good digital connectivity – particularly essential for business success, it also provides major benefits at home.



This includes enabling home working, supporting kids doing their homework, enabling you to stream HD films and programmes, accessing public services, supporting independent living and healthcare, video calling colleagues, friends and relatives, or connecting the many devices that we have in our homes now like Alexa, Ring, Hive etc. All of this could be possible at the same time with a decent broadband connection!

Our demand for data rich uses over the internet is only likely to grow in the future. That is why I am an advocate for targeted public investment in Full Fibre broadband in areas of need, as well as working with commercial telecoms providers to attract private investment to improve digital connectivity in our communities.

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Keep in touch with us...

If you have any questions about broadband issues in your area then please contact the Superfast Northamptonshire team. Email us at: bigidea.ncc@northnouthants.gov.uk

To find out more:

Follow us on Twitter at: [@SFastNorthants](https://twitter.com/SFastNorthants)

Go to the project website: www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net
Explore to find out more!



North
Northamptonshire
Council

Broadband coverage in North Northamptonshire

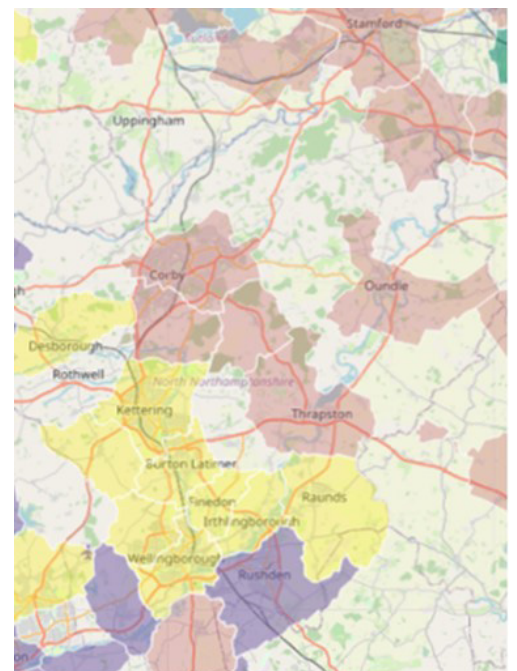
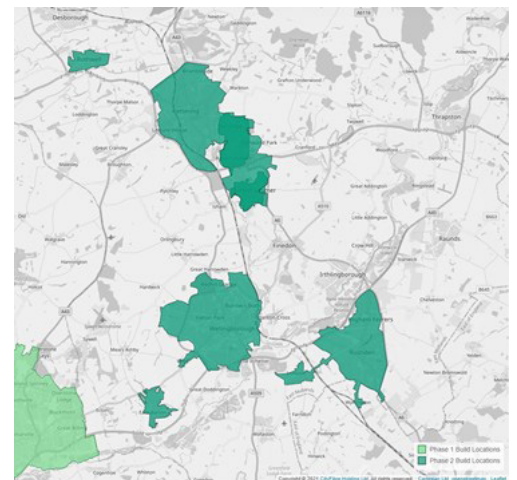
Over the last decade, great strides have been made to improve broadband connectivity across Northamptonshire. Superfast broadband ($\geq 30\text{Mbps}$) was available to just 72% of premises in the county in early 2013 compared to 99% now and Full Fibre coverage was just 0.4% compared to almost 42% countywide now.

In North Northamptonshire there has been a massive jump in the availability of gigabit capable broadband in just the last 18 months or so. This has risen from around 10% in Autumn 2020 to over 80% of premises at the end of March 2022. This compares to just 66% of premises in England. This massive boost has been driven by the upgrade of Virgin Media cable in August 2021. Gigabit coverage in rural North Northamptonshire is almost double the rural average for England/Wales at 70% compared to just 36%. Coverage is looking good in North Northamptonshire but there is still more to be done.

Full Fibre coverage is making good progress in the area and is now available to 29% of premises but performance could be better. However, rural Full Fibre in North Northamptonshire is out-performing England/Wales at 36% compared to 30%. This is primarily attributable to Gigaclear and Openreach investment. We expect Full Fibre in our urban areas to be boosted over the next few years through major commercial investments. This includes **CityFibre's plans** in North Northamptonshire which will start in Kettering and are expected to include Burton Latimer, Wellingborough, Rushden and Rothwell. Timescales are to be confirmed.

In addition, the substantial **Openreach Fibre First programme** will also boost local Full Fibre coverage. Amongst other locations, this includes planned coverage in Corby, Kettering, Burton Latimer, Wellingborough, Rushden, Irthlingborough, and Desborough. No firm timescales have been announced for delivery but work is already progressing and is expected to run until 2026. Whilst many premises in the announced exchange areas will be served, some are expected to prove unviable to serve commercially or may be undeliverable due to barriers beyond Openreach's control such as agreements to access private land. **See the Superfast Northamptonshire News page** for the list of announced exchanges.

Alongside these commercial investments by **telecoms providers**, North Northamptonshire Council is continuing to work with Gigaclear Networks to bring Full Fibre to more rural areas. Gigaclear is also further extending its already significant commercial investment in the area, with plans now coming forward in Oundle and Thrapston.



What is gigabit capable broadband?

Gigabit capable broadband can provide a download speed of at least 1 gigabit per second (Gbps) (equivalent to 1,000 megabits per second (Mbps) which can be delivered by a range of technologies. People can order services of less than a gigabit on such networks, but they provide the potential for gigabit services for those data hungry households and businesses.

These include full-fibre networks, high-speed cable such as Virgin Media's latest DOCSIS 3.1 cable upgrade, 5G and some Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) networks. Gigabit capable networks are more reliable than existing copper wires or partial fibre networks (Fibre to the Cabinet) which are currently more widespread.

Spotlight On ... Working with Gigaclear

Through the Superfast Northamptonshire project, North and West Northamptonshire Council's are bringing Full Fibre broadband to around 6,800 premises in Northamptonshire through contracts with Gigaclear Networks. These involve joint investment plans worth over £15m including almost £10m of public funding and have attracted considerably more private investment from Gigaclear in the area. Premises which are benefitting from public investment are those which were not expected to be served commercially in the rural areas (having consulted with telecoms providers). This will provide them with access to some of the fastest broadband services available. Over 5,500 premises have now been served, including over 2,000 in North Northamptonshire. Overall, Gigaclear have built to 36,000 rural premises in Northamptonshire and are expected to double this in the county in next few years.

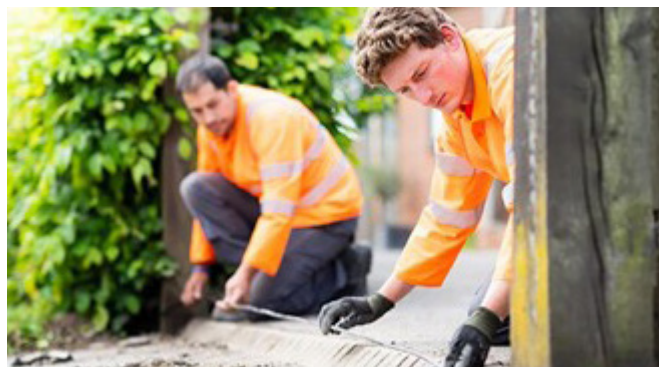
Some of the local communities now served in North Northamptonshire include:

Aldwinkle, Ashton, Bulwick, Blatherwyke, Clopton, Cottingham, Deene, Deenethorpe, Dingley, Fineshade, Geddington, Grafton Underwood, Great Doddington, Hemington, Kings Cliffe, Laxton, Loddington, Lowick, Lutton, Mears Ashby, Newton, Orton, Pilton, Polebrook, Stoke Doyle, Sudborough, Sywell, Thurning, Wakerley, Warmington and Wilby.

Gigaclear have also invested commercially to serve all or parts of Apethorpe, Braybrooke, Cotterstock, Cransley, Glapthorn, Harrington, Harringworth, Kings Cliffe, Nassington, Southwick, Thorpe



Malsor, Thorpe Underwood, Upper and Lower Benefield, Woodnewton and parts of Yarwell. Work has recently commenced in Oundle which will bring Full Fibre to residents and businesses in the town this year. Much of this will be delivered through existing ducts in the ground which will minimise disruption. There is good news for those living and working in Thrapston too as Gigaclear expect to complete their Full Fibre build here in 2022.



Go to www.gigaclear.com to find out if you can order a service and transform your broadband experience. If services aren't available to you yet, you can register an interest. The 200Mbps service is currently available from £17 per month (May 2022).

Gigaclear have partnered with a number of other internet service providers. You can find out more at [Our Partners | Gigaclear](#).



Superfast 200
Superfast and super reliable.



Ultrafast 300
Perfect for homes with busy broadband.



Ultrafast 600
A rapid package for more heavy-duty users.



Hyperfast 900
Offering the ultimate online experience.

About the build



Before Gigaclear start building in a community, residents should receive a letter with information about the build and what to expect. The Parish Council should also be informed and sometimes Gigaclear will be able to attend a parish council or community meeting to answer questions about the build.



Gigaclear will complete on site surveys to better understand the terrain, environment and constraints and will seek permits to complete works on the Highway. They will liaise with Highways on the best location to site necessary equipment, including the green roadside cabinets which house critical technical equipment. In many cases, Gigaclear's engineers will go out on site with a Highways Inspector to review those considerations in advance of build. Whilst these decisions are carefully considered with the local environs in mind, there are numerous factors and technical considerations which have to be taken into account when deciding on possible locations and in some cases the choice may be very limited. Gigaclear are unable to consult the Parish Council and residents on where a cabinet should be stood. As you can imagine, every person may well have a different view which would make it impossible to reach a timely decision. This is Permitted Development from a Planning perspective.

There can be some disruption while the network is being rolled out, particularly if Gigaclear need to dig trenching to lay new ducts. This is not always the case and Gigaclear will utilise existing ducts or poles where these are available and where it is viable to do so. Sometimes, existing ducts are found to be damaged, blocked or full of existing other utilities which may delay build or prohibit their use. When civils works are required, Gigaclear aim to keep disruption to a minimum to the extent possible. While it may be inconvenient to some, it is worth remembering that any disruption is time limited, whilst the new Full Fibre broadband services delivered will be available and bring benefits for decades to come! It may even add value to your property.

With such a significant build programme, of course issues can arise from time to time. Gigaclear have a dedicated Network Build Care team to help manage any incidents and to investigate and resolve issues as quickly as possible. For any 'live build' matters, contact the team at networkbuildcare@gigaclear.com.

Once the build is complete, surfaces are reinstated in accordance with Highways standards. Any disturbed soft verges are also reinstated. However, depending on the time of year they may not be re-seeded immediately and a temporary soft reinstatement may be provided. This is to take account of growing conditions. For example, if it's too wet seeds can be washed away or die off if the temperatures are too frosty.

Gigaclear will put a buried POT at the boundary of every property ready for residents to be able to order a service once the network has gone live.



Gigaclear Community Hubs

Gigaclear also have a Community Hub offer to connect and provide a service to village halls in communities they are serving. This is at Gigaclear's expense for at least 12 months. 15 hubs are currently active in North Northamptonshire:

Village Hall, Wilbarston
The Village Hall, Aldwinckle
The Village Hall, Cotterstock
The Village Hall, Barnwell
Village Hall, Dingley
The Village Hall, Yarwell
The Village Hall, Deene
Cricket Pavilion, Loddington

The Village Hall, Woodnewton
The Village Hall, Mears Ashby
The Pavilion, Titchmarsh
The Village Hall, Warmington
Village Hall, Chelveston
The Village Hall, Laxton
Kings Cliffe Memorial Hall, Kings Cliffe

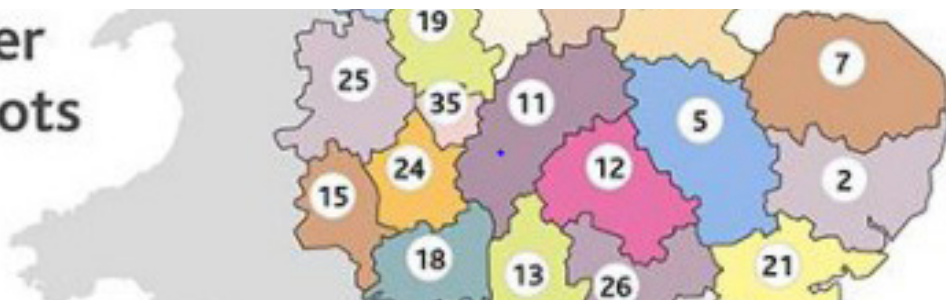
Find out more about connecting your community at [Community Hub | Gigaclear](#).

Project Gigabit

In March 2021, the government revealed its plans for the first measures under its £5bn rebranded broadband connectivity programme known as Project Gigabit (formerly 'Outside In'). This is the government's national mission to deliver gigabit capable, reliable broadband for everyone in the UK. The Government has set a target to see at least 85% of UK premises able to access gigabit capable broadband by 2025, and to achieve as close to 100% coverage thereafter. At a UK level the Government expect over 80% of coverage to be delivered commercially by broadband network providers. Project Gigabit is providing a catalyst for that commercial investment and providing subsidy to serve the 'hardest-to-reach' properties which are not viable commercially.

Regional procurements, led and managed by Building Digital UK (BDUK), the government agency leading on all things broadband, are coming forward in phases in support of the gigabit roll out. Commercial broadband network suppliers will compete to win the contracts to help deliver Project Gigabit. There are two main Lots which are relevant to Northamptonshire - Lot 5 Phase 1a (Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas, including part of North Northants) and Lot 12 Phase 2b (Bedfordshire, parts of Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes).

Regional Supplier Procurements Lots



You can find out more about Project Gigabit, including information on Lot 5 and Lot 12, at [Building Digital UK - Project Gigabit](#) (superfastnorthamptonshire.net). We will also be providing an update here shortly on Lot 11 and Lot 13 which include small parts of Northamptonshire.

The scope of coverage to be delivered through Lot 5 and Lot 12 (which premises will benefit from access to gigabit broadband connectivity) will not be known until contracts are awarded. More information will be posted on the [government](#) and [Superfast Northamptonshire](#) websites when available, including the Spring Update on Project Gigabit which is expected to be published by BDUK shortly.

Lot 5 Procurement – Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas, including parts of North Northamptonshire

Registrations of interest for the Lot 5 procurement opened in January 2022. The procurement process is currently ongoing, managed by BDUK. Contract award is expected by the end of the year.

A Public Review to inform the Lot 5 intervention area was launched in May 2021 and closed in June 2021. This has helped to determine the extent of eligible premises (those outside of reasonable commercial plans) and includes some within the rural eastern half of North Northamptonshire and around Corby. The Public Review closure notice, including illustrative maps of the outcome, can be viewed here at [**Cambridgeshire Lot 5 Closure Notice**](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Lot 12 Procurement Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes

The Lot 12 procurement is currently expected to start later this year, with contract award in the second half of 2023. Lot 12 includes a geography covering most of West Northamptonshire and the western side of North Northamptonshire as well as Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes.


A BDUK consultation on the intervention area for Lot 12 closed on 29th April 2022. This was primarily aimed at the telecoms sector to determine the extent of their commercial plans but was open to all stakeholders to respond. The Outcome Report will be published in due course, including a map of the proposed eligible intervention area. This will be made available via the government's website and will be posted on the Superfast Northamptonshire website [**Project Gigabit page**](#).



News in Brief

- ▶ **Super Slow broadband? Let Us Know!** – If you have a very poor internet connection (speeds of less than 10Mbps) then we want to hear from you. Let us know by emailing the Superfast Northamptonshire team at [**bigidea.ncc@northnorthants.gov.uk**](mailto:bigidea.ncc@northnorthants.gov.uk). You can find out the estimated line speeds available at your property by going to the Openreach checker at [**www.broadbandchecker.btwholesale.com/#/ADSL**](https://www.broadbandchecker.btwholesale.com/#/ADSL). Other network coverage by [**CityFibre**](#), [**VirginMedia**](#) or [**Gigaclear**](#) may be available.
- ▶ **Social tariffs** - Social tariffs can provide a safety net for eligible households who are struggling to afford broadband or phone services. Some providers offer social tariffs which are only available to customers who receive certain government benefits. You can find out more at [**Cheaper broadband and phone packages - Ofcom**](#). See also [**Millions of households on benefits could save £100s on broadband bills**](#) - how to check if you can get a cheaper tariff (moneysavingexpert.com)
- ▶ **Merged Futures 4** – have you signed up for the Digital Northants Merged Futures event taking place this year on Friday 17th July 2022. This is the fourth such annual event which showcases technology innovation, bringing together digital and tech experts in business, education, healthcare and more from Northamptonshire and beyond. Find out more and get a free ticket at [**Merged Futures 4 — Digital Northants**](https://digitalnorthampton.com) (digitalnorthampton.com).
- ▶ **Changes to UK telephone networks** – find out about the national switch over from traditional copper based analogue networks to digital all Internet Protocol (IP) by 2025 and what you need to do [**UK Landline Digital Upgrade**](#) (superfastnorthamptonshire.net). Check to see what business and home devices and systems you have which rely on the telephone network including house alarms and home personal care devices which may be impacted by the digital switch over.
- ▶ **DiscoverNN App** – Discover North Northamptonshire from the palm of your hand! The DiscoverNN App supports local businesses, and helps residents and visitors see everything the area has to offer. To find out more and download the App go to [**DiscoverNN app | North Northamptonshire Council**](#) (northnorthants.gov.uk)


Find out more and explore the project website

- [Superfast Northamptonshire website](#)
- [The Roll Out Schedule](#)
- [When and Where Map](#)
- [Building Digital UK - Project Gigabit](#)
- [Working with Gigaclear](#)
- [Working with Openreach](#)
- [UK Landline Digital Upgrade](#)
- [Support](#)
- [News](#)
- [Digital Northants](#)


[Delivery -](#) [When and Where -](#) [At Home -](#) [Business -](#) [Find Out More -](#) [Support](#) [Contact](#)




OUT OF THIS WORLD SPEEDS




Superfast 200
Superfast and super reliable.



Ultrafast 300
Perfect for homes with busy broadband.



Ultrafast 600
A rapid package for more heavy-duty users.

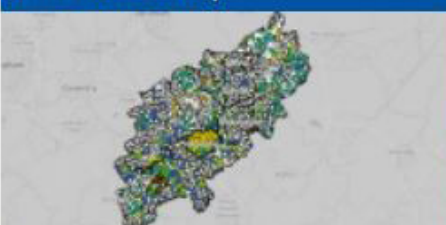


Hyperfast 900
Offering the ultimate online experience.

Superfast Northamptonshire working with Gigaclear to deliver rural Full Fibre


[Read more](#)

When and Where Map




Enter your postcode to find out the latest plans in your area

Get Connected




If superfast broadband is available in your area, find out how you can get connected

The Roll Out




See how superfast broadband is being rolled out in Northamptonshire

Broadband at Home




Access the latest in entertainment on the internet and open up a whole new world

Broadband for Business



Access the latest digital connectivity and its ability to support innovation and growth

UK Gigabit Vouchers



Find out whether your home or business is eligible for a voucher

