



North
Northamptonshire
Council



December
2022



Cllr David Howes
the Executive Member for
Rural Communities & Localism

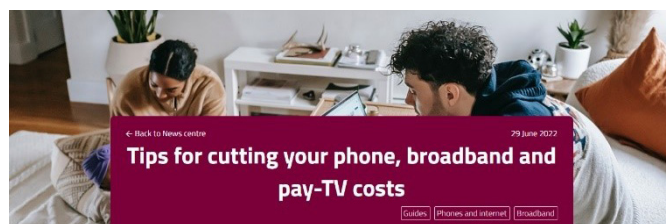
Newsletter

Superfast Northamptonshire

Message from Councillor David Howes

With Christmas upon us and TV adverts promoting numerous deals on broadband packages, I wonder how many of us are taking the time to review the best deals. Our budgets are so much more stretched these days. For some residents on certain benefits like Universal Credit, social tariffs may offer an opportunity to reduce the cost of broadband.

However, if you are not tied into a contract with your current internet service provider (ISP) and you are able to switch (so much easier these days), then it is also worth checking on other offers available.



For example, we are delivering rural Full Fibre with Gigaclear – they do not offer a social tariff as such but their lowest priced deal is only £17 per month for a 200Mbps service. This is comparable with other advertised social tariffs available which currently range from £10 to £20 per month.

To find out more about social tariffs, how to apply and cutting costs go to **Tips for cutting your phone, broadband and pay-TV costs - Ofcom**. This also provides helpful advice about switching your ISP.

Merry Christmas!

In this edition...

1. Broadband coverage in North Northamptonshire
2. Spotlight On – CityFibre
3. A Word from Gigaclear
4. Openreach £36m Full Fibre investment
5. Tresham Techspo Showcase

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@northnorthants.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!



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Working together to connect you

In this December edition I have invited contributions from a number of our key Full Fibre network providers. Commercial investment in the area will be critical to help us realise our ambition for widespread Full Fibre coverage.

I met with CityFibre in the autumn this year to see and learn more about their technology and network build in the area. As CityFibre have recently connected their first homes and businesses in Kettering, I thought it was timely to invite James Cushing, Area Manager to update us on their investment in North Northamptonshire and future plans.



From left Sarah Naylor, Superfast Northamptonshire Manager NNC, James Cushing CityFibre Area Manager, Cllr David Howes NNC Executive Member for Rural Communities and Localism, and local CityFibre Engineers: Hannah Carter (Lead Build Assurance Manager) and Matthew Ginnings (City Build Manager).

Broadband Coverage in North Northamptonshire

Great progress is being made on Gigabit capable broadband coverage in North Northamptonshire. At the end of November 2022, this had reached over **83%** of premises in the area. This compares to 75% on average across England. Gigabit capable networks include Full Fibre and other technologies capable of supporting gigabit speed services such as Virgin Media's DOCSIS 3.1 cable network.

Full Fibre coverage is increasing also, with **37.7%** of premises in North Northamptonshire served by the end of November. This is slightly below the average across England (43%). Nonetheless we have seen a significant jump of 14% in the last 12 months (up from 23.7%) so the trajectory is most definitely a positive one. As commercial plans in the area start to ramp up, including CityFibre's network build in Kettering and Wellingborough, we can expect to see a boost to Full Fibre availability and a positive upward trend over the coming months.

Find out more and explore the project website:

Superfast Northamptonshire website www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net

Project Gigabit - Building Digital UK

Working with Gigaclear

Working with Openreach

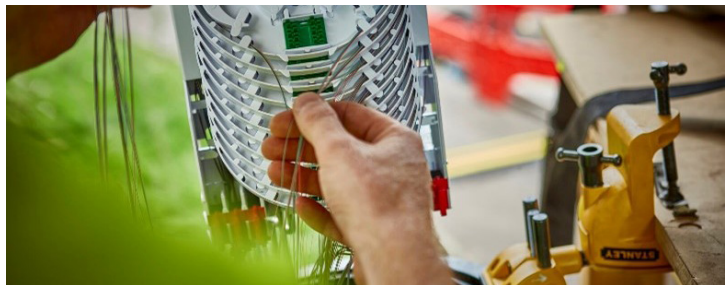
UK Landline Digital Upgrade

Support

Spotlight on ... CityFibre in North Northamptonshire

By James Cushing, CityFibre Area Manager

“Work is now well underway on CityFibre’s multi million investment in deploying future proof Full Fibre broadband infrastructure in North Northamptonshire, with well over 40km of new fibreoptic network already deployed in the area, principally in Kettering.



CityFibre is the UK’s largest independent Full Fibre infrastructure platform, providing wholesale services and enabling ultra-fast, reliable and futureproof broadband, ethernet and 5G services to serve homes and businesses as well as schools, hospitals and GPs surgeries. Full fibre networks, unlike many of the copper-based ‘fibre broadband’ services available today, use 100 per cent fibre optic technology to carry data at light speed. This gives users speeds of up to 1,000 Mbps (Gigabit) for upload and download today, near limitless bandwidth and connectivity users can depend on. Furthermore, the network is upgradable, with CityFibre in the process of deploying the latest XGSPON technology which can offer speeds of up to 10 Gigabits (100x the average download speed in North Northants).

There are a growing number of Internet Service Providers (ISP) on the network, including the likes of Vodafone, Talk Talk, Zen, Giganet, Rocket Fibre and many more. This means residents have a range and choice of services, with prices currently starting from £20 a month. During the current cost of living crisis, many of our ISP partners also offer social tariffs and support for residents who may be eligible for Universal Credit etc. This includes subsidised tariffs and access to financial advice and wider support. The Council has also agreed a master wayleave with CityFibre meaning that the network can be deployed to the Council’s housing stock in Kettering and providing the benefits of full fibre to its tenants, and crucially not creating pockets of digital exclusion.



Work started on the £17m investment in Kettering in May. First homes have very recently become ready for service in the town, around the Northfield Avenue and Rockingham Road area. Works are continuing in the Windmill and Wickstead area. Civils works are expected to be complete by Q3 2023.

In Wellingborough, the £14 million investment in the town began at the end of October. Works are ongoing in the Croylund and Swanspool area. Civils works are expected to be complete by Q3 2023, though additional fibre installation works will continue after this period.

While it will take many months to build the town wide networks, teams will usually only be operating in individual streets for a few days where construction work is required.

Plans for future investment in North Northamptonshire are also being considered and developed, focusing on Corby, Rothwell and Desborough. These combined investments will have a significant impact on the fibre availability in the area. Providing fibre broadband is recognised as a Government priority and will play a significant part in the levelling up agenda.

CityFibre is a Code Power registered provider (allowing them powers to install and maintain networks under the Electronic Communications act) and is regulated by Ofcom. In deploying the network a range of build techniques are used, including tried and tested Hybrid construction methods, where they seek to minimise disruption to residents and make best use of existing infrastructure, including any existing telecommunications ducting and telephone poles. The amount of existing infrastructure used, does vary by location, but at a town level will be greater than 50%, significantly reducing the impact of works in an area and having positive environmental impacts, in terms of less CO2 being used in the construction process.

North Northamptonshire is among a growing number of locations in the UK to benefit from CityFibre’s nationwide Gigabit City Investment Programme which will bring new and improved broadband infrastructure within reach of up to eight million homes and businesses nationwide.

Granemore Group are CityFibre’s prime contractor for the network build in the area. They have also recently invested in a new headquarters facility and main yard in North Northamptonshire from where the teams and equipment are managed.

Residents interested in giving their home or business broadband a boost can find out more about the build, register their interest and ensure they are updated on service availability at www.cityfibre.com.

A word from Gigaclear

By Roisin McGettigan, Gigaclear Community Engagement Manager

Gigaclear continue to work on extending their Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) network to the hardest to reach rural areas. Having already ensured 25,000 premises are Ready for Service (RFS) and with over 30,000 additional premises built to in North Northants, there is a strong possibility that you can get access to our Ultra-Fast network if you live in the rural areas. For those not included in the 30,000, good news!... Gigaclear will be continuing their build in Thrapston and Oundle, and with residents in Ringstead expected to go live before June 2023, there is plenty to look forward to. To see if you are included in our build plans or any future plans, please go to <https://gigaclear.com/locations>



At Gigaclear, we understand the ongoing problems rural communities face, such as the theft of copper wires; particularly in Geddington, cutting people off from vital services, such as landline. To respond to this, Gigaclear has launched a Voice over internet Protocol, or VoIP package. Unlike traditional phonelines that are reliant on archaic copper wire systems, VoIP works through Wi-Fi, and the best thing is, you can get rid of that pesky line rental too. With FTTP, you do not need to rely on the copper wire system, you have your own independent fibre line, so say goodbye to latency or lag and hello up to 900mbps speeds; (package depending).

Our philosophy isn't just rooted in internet cables, no, at Gigaclear, we are committed to giving back and supporting truly inspirational initiatives throughout the communities we work in. We understand that times are tough for our communities, and we try to support wherever we can. In the last two months alone, we have provided donations to several charities, from food banks to community projects, as well as donating 100 books to a local Community Centre to make sure that every child receives a gift this Christmas. We also support a plethora of warm room initiatives.

Our Pièce de Résistance is our Community Hubs Scheme, which has provided local community hubs in Titchmarsh, Lowick and Barnwell (can also add Chelveston, Thorpe Waterville, Glapthorn) with a 900mbps package to support the needs of residents. Community Hubs show our commitment to the areas in which we work. With the speeds provided, hubs have hosted lots of events, from movie and quiz nights to online shopping sessions.



Roisin McGettigan (right) Gigaclear Community Engagement Manager
with book donations at a Northamptonshire library

£36m broadband network reaches 120,000 homes and businesses across Northamptonshire

By Niall Mullin, Openreach's programme manager for Northamptonshire

More than 120,000 premises across Northamptonshire can now order some of the most reliable, and fastest broadband in Europe thanks to a £36 million investment by Openreach.

And more areas in North Northamptonshire are set to benefit, as engineers are now starting work to extend the full fibre network to most homes and businesses in places such as **Corby, and Wellingborough** (after Christmas).

People living and working in those areas will see an increase in engineer activity in the coming weeks and months, as our teams get to work installing the new full fibre network.

Full fibre is up to 16 times faster than the average UK broadband connection and around five times more reliable than the old copper-based network its replacing. With download speeds of up to 1 Gbps, this means faster game downloads, better quality video calls and higher resolution movie streaming. You can also use multiple devices at once without experiencing slowdown.



Full fibre is also less affected by peak time congestion – so you can enjoy your Saturday night blockbuster in 4K without the dreaded buffering screen.

Openreach has previously worked closely with Northamptonshire County Council, and now with both North and West Northamptonshire Councils, particularly with Highways, and as a partner in the local BDUK broadband programme.

The company has announced plans to invest in Full Fibre broadband in dozens of other towns and villages across the wider Northamptonshire area, including Blisworth, Bozeat, Brackley, Braunston, Brigstock, Byfield, Crick, Hackleton, Long Buckby, Oundle, Thrapston, Weedon, and Yardley Gobion.

It's part of the company's plans to reach 25 million UK homes and businesses by the end of 2026.

Visit www.openreach.com for more information about the build. Or go to **Where and when we're building Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband | Openreach** to view the Fibre First map.



Tresham Techspo Showcase

School pupils aiming for a future career in the digital and technology industries had the chance to network with local sector leaders at a showcase event held in October 2022.

Tresham College, part of The Bedford College Group, working with North Northamptonshire Council, hosted the invitation only Techspo event at the Kettering campus.



It was an opportunity to showcase the technology courses available at Tresham College - from digital marketing to game design and software development. Technology companies also attended to share their work and career opportunities with names including Smart Octopus Voice Agency, AR Media, Starship Robotics and Voi e-scooters.

Students from local schools took part in a Dragons Den-style competition to pitch ideas for protecting the environment and improving town centres using new technology. Ideas ranged from the use of robots to pick up and recycle litter on beaches to solar powered e-bikes. The winning students pitched the idea of monetising recycling by using a QR code for people to tap, identify their item to recycle before opening a recycling container to drop the item into. Money is then transferred to your bank.

The session was part of the Digital Northamptonshire initiative which also includes the successful and annual Merged Futures event hosted by the University of Northampton in the summer.

"What a fantastic day. I was genuinely blown away by the sustainability pitches we received, the motivation of the students and the energy of the staff to make all this happen. I really hope this is just the start of turning Tresham into a place where entrepreneurial thinking is encouraged and developed in the students. Some of the ideas were good enough to hit the market straight away." - Cllr David Howes, the Council's Executive Member for Rural Communities and Localism

Cllr David Howes led the dragons and presented the winning team with a virtual reality headset.

The event presented a great opportunity for new connections to be made between schools, Tresham College and local tech business to spark future collaborations and pathways into the industry.

