

County Council Announces Ultrafast Stage 3 Plans

The County Council has announced Gigaclear as the winner of two contracts to deliver Stage 3 of the Superfast Northamptonshire project. This new partnership raises the game on broadband speeds available by bringing ultrafast broadband (up to 1 gigabit) to more communities and premises in parts of rural Northamptonshire.

Gigaclear has already passed over 5,500 premises in the county as part of their own commercial plans. The deal with the County Council means that many more areas will benefit from a full fibre solution. The network will reach rural areas where there are no commercial plans and which otherwise would be unlikely to be served. The County Council is injecting £6.58m of public funding to secure the deal, including £1.68m from the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and £4.9m from the County Council. Gigaclear are investing over £3.65m in the target area.

This latest initiative from Superfast Northamptonshire takes the project substantially towards the County Council's ambitious target to see countywide access to superfast broadband. More news on other Stage 3 measures will be announced during 2017.

Read on to find out more about the new plans secured and what this may mean for your community.

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County Council joins forces with Gigaclear for Stage 3 Rural Areas

Boldly going where no other superfast broadband provider has gone before! Gigaclear will be rolling out full fibre broadband networks across many parts of rural Northamptonshire. These plans will serve over 6,330 additional homes and businesses in some of the harder to reach areas of the county. The full fibre to the premise technology will provide for the fastest broadband speeds available in the county.

Gigaclear transforms how rural communities connect with the world by building pure fibre networks directly to each property (known as fibre-to-the-premises or FTTP), to bring reliable internet speeds of up to 1Gbps

depending on what service a household or business wishes to take up. Imagine being able to download a movie in less than one minute instead of a quarter of an hour, upload 200 holiday photos in under 10 seconds or download a new album in just a few seconds - Gigaclear's full fibre network could enable you to do all these things and more!

Gigaclear's ultrafast broadband is up to 33 times faster than the UK average!

(Source OFCOM, UK fixed-line broadband performance.)

Stage 3 plans with Gigaclear will provide over 6,300 rural premises with access to broadband speeds up to 1Gbps.

**Over £10m of new investment in the county:
£4.88m County Council
£1.68m DCMS
£3.65m Gigaclear**

Gigaclear offered optimum solution

After a competitive procurement process which was launched by the County Council on 1st September 2016, Gigaclear were awarded two contracts to deliver this first part of Stage 3 of the Superfast Northamptonshire project. A number of telecoms providers responded to the Invitation to Tender (ITT) which invited bids by 1st December 2016. Following an evaluation process undertaken by the County Council and independent technical and commercial advisors Farrpoint, contracts were awarded and signed on 27th January 2017. This was after the completion of processes to secure final State aid clearance from the National Competence

Centre (required to enable public funding to be invested) and assurance by BDUK (the unit of DCMS which oversees the Superfast Britain Programme).

Cllr Ian Morris, whose county council cabinet portfolio covers the Superfast Northamptonshire project, said:

"I'm delighted that we're going to be working with Gigaclear on Stage 3 of our Superfast Northamptonshire project, which will focus on those hardest to reach rural areas, which are the most difficult to serve with infrastructure.

"Having a county with excellent broadband infrastructure is essential if we want to be able to compete economically with other areas. The contracts awarded to Gigaclear will enable local businesses to benefit from some of the fastest broadband speeds available which is good news for data hungry operations and will help to boost the bottom line, whilst access to ultrafast broadband at home means the whole family can get online to take advantage of all that the internet has to offer."

Danny Moody, Chief Executive of the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils said:

"Northants CALC welcomes this announcement, which is great news for the communities that will be covered. It is good to have competition in the market place and we hope that it leads to better services for everyone. Instead of being left behind, these small communities will now receive a broadband service that will be the envy of the county. We will continue to assist Northamptonshire County Council in their aim to deliver decent broadband speeds for everyone in Northamptonshire, whether in the biggest towns or the smallest villages."

Call for tenders

The Invitation to Tender (ITT), published by the County Council asked bidders to put forward proposals to plan, design, build, operate and maintain high performance Next Generation Access broadband networks as

part of the next Stage of the Superfast Northamptonshire project.

The intervention area for the ITT comprised around 8,500 rural premises divided in two areas. Bidders were asked to put forward their proposals to serve as many of the 8,500 premises as possible for the £6.58m of public gap funding available. Such plans were also to provide for 'whole community solutions' to the extent reasonably possible. This was to avoid creating partially covered villages which would leave some homes without an upgrade.

The ITT called for high performance Next Generation Access (NGA) solutions i.e. a fibre optic based network infrastructure. This should be capable of providing minimum download speeds of at least 30Mbps and meeting national NGA technology guidelines. This could involve full fibre solutions known as fibre to the premises (FTTP), or fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) technology which is a fibre based solution that also relies on the existing copper network for the last leg, or Fixed Wireless Access where this meets higher NGA standards utilising a fibre backhaul.

Gigaclear were appointed as they offered the optimum solution, including responding positively to the County Council's whole community requirement and making a strong private investment commitment to Northamptonshire.

The County Council is now working with Gigaclear to mobilise Stage 3. This includes establishing project management and governance arrangements as well as the commencement of the more detailed planning and survey work required before network build can commence. More information on the roll out programme will be available once this work is completed - likely by April/May 2017. The fibre build will commence later this year and will be completed by December 2018.

The communities which are in plans with Gigaclear and set to benefit from ultrafast broadband are shown below. These are the communities which currently have no

provision at all. There will also be communities that are currently partially served or more remote premises that will also be in plans. The When and Where map will be updated shortly to show the new Stage 3 plans. In the meantime the map in this newsletter shows planned coverage based on postcode level mapping.

New for Stage 3 is that Gigaclear will provide premise level information on expected coverage (not just post code level). You can also use [Gigaclear's on-line checker facility](#) to see if your premise is part of new Stage 3 plans (subject to detailed on site surveys) and also to register an interest.

To find out if your home or business is in plans, or to register an interest, please go to www.gigaclear.com or click on the link to access [Gigaclear's postcode checker](#). The When and Where map on the project website will be updated shortly to show the new planned coverage.

Communities expected to benefit

More than 6,300 rural premises are due to be served as part of these Stage 3 plans and all involving Gigaclear's pure Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) solution, irrespective of their location and current broadband speed. The solution will provide for symmetrical services. This means that upload speeds can be the same as download speeds. Over thirty communities which currently suffer from poor broadband speeds are set to benefit.

These are:

Appletree	Caldecote
Caldercott	Clay Coton
Clopton	Crowfield
Deene	Deenethorpe
Falcutt	Fineshade
Halse	Hemington
Holdenby	Hulcote
Laxton	Little Purston
Luddington	Newton Bromswold
Passenham	Preston Deanery
Slipton	Stanford
Stoke Doyle	Teeton
Thurning	Wakerley
Whilton	Whiston
Wigsthorpe	Winwick

However, these are not the only areas within new Stage 3 plans with Gigaclear. For example, other areas include Ashton, Lutton, Nobottle and Orton to name but a few. The map overleaf shows the planned coverage at a postcode level.

Other Stage 3 measures

If your community is not listed and is in a light blue area on the map, don't worry. This means that we will be seeking solutions through other Stage 3 measures for these areas. You can find out more about this on the Progress Overview page of the project website. There may appear to still be quite a lot of light blue areas on the map given these only cover around 2% of premises in the county but it is important to remember that this includes fields, woodland and other areas which contain no premises - as a rural county there are quite a lot of them! To view the coverage map in more detail which shows Gigaclear's and other plans in the county, go to the ['Progress Overview'](#) page on the project website.

The County Council appreciates how important getting superfast broadband is to many families and businesses and how transformational this can be - this is why we set an ambitious full coverage target and why Stage 3 measures do not stop here.

About Gigaclear

Gigaclear is a fibre network telecoms provider in the UK who are already serving some areas in rural Northamptonshire. Since its beginnings six years ago, Gigaclear has built 60 rural fibre networks with a further 25 in construction. Gigaclear now operates networks across thirteen counties: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Gloucestershire, Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Rutland and Worcestershire.

Gigaclear is empowering rural Britain with ultra-fast broadband and getting people better connected.

Over the last three years Gigaclear has been building a network in rural Northamptonshire, using its own investment to connect over 5,500 properties, the majority of which are already live. Now that Gigaclear has won the Superfast Northamptonshire contract for Stage 3, the company will be connecting an additional 6,300 premises to its ultrafast network, thanks to the County Council and Government backed scheme.

A 100% pure fibre network, direct to homes and businesses

Gigaclear's approach is different than most other Internet Service Providers as it uses 100% pure fibre to build its networks. This means that the fibre is connected directly to every customer's premises (FTTP). This differs from a Fibre to the Cabinet solution which utilises the existing copper network to provide the last leg of the network connection.

FTTP means that you have access to the fastest broadband speeds in the country, up to 1Gbps, depending on what level of service you choose to buy. The upload and download speeds are reliable and run consistently at the same ultrafast speed, with no drop off during bad weather or busy web-surfing

periods. In addition, Gigaclear builds 'inclusive' fibre networks, meaning that every property it passes with its fibre can access the best broadband speeds, regardless of how far the property is from the fibre cabinet.

This futureproof network could be life-changing for residents and businesses in rural Northamptonshire and will have a huge impact on the local economy as the ultrafast speeds help to transform the productivity, commercial opportunities and bottom line for local businesses as well as helping to attract new companies to the area - large parts of rural Northamptonshire could soon be one of the best connected areas in the country. If Gigaclear is unfamiliar to you and you want to hear more from people who are already served by Gigaclear, a number of testimonial videos from their customers are available to view on the Gigaclear website.

Gigaclear Testimonial

"The farm shop is a popular place for local people to meet, eat and shop, but before we only had up to 6Mbps speeds, which just wasn't enough. The Internet was slow for customers who came in for lunch or to shop and card payments took a fair amount of time to go through. Now the sky is the limit when it comes to growing the business, thanks to the ultrafast service from Gigaclear. We're even looking into setting up a click and collect service for customers as a result!"

Tom Newey, Owner of the Cobbs Farm Shop and Kitchen, West Berkshire

[Click here to find out more.](#)

Progress Towards the County Council's full coverage target

These latest plans with Gigaclear mean that superfast (and ultrafast) broadband coverage in the county should reach all but 2% of premises. It also delivers much higher speed networks in the rural areas than envisaged. This is great news and substantially meets the County Council's

ambition but there is still more to do to meet the ultimate full coverage target.

The Stage 3 approach involves a number of measures of which the ITT is the first but not only part. The County Council is also pursuing other initiatives to help extend coverage further. This includes working with BT through existing contracts to explore additional coverage plans, considering any further opportunities with Gigaclear, and continuing to promote Northamptonshire as a great place for private telecoms providers to invest commercially - the more commercial investment and coverage attracted to the county, the less need and reliance on public funding to help provide solutions.

The new Stage 3 plans with Gigaclear should extend superfast broadband coverage in Northamptonshire to over 97% by the end of 2017 and to 98% by the end of 2018; this is when Gigaclear will complete its full fibre network build. This builds on the substantial Stage 1 and 2 roll out with BT, which is providing over 74,250 premises with access to superfast broadband (speeds above >24Mbps) by the end of 2017, as well as existing and planned commercial coverage.

The local target to see full coverage by the end of 2017 has been a key driver for delivery and Northamptonshire has continued to be one of the top projects in national rankings. Because of this stretching local target, coverage in Northamptonshire will reach well beyond national policy objectives to see 95% coverage by the end of 2017. BDUK estimate that superfast broadband coverage could reach 97% nationally by 2020 - Northamptonshire should achieve this three years early. The availability of public funding and the capacity and capability of the telecoms market to deliver to such demanding timescales have been key dependencies on full achievement, whilst the County Council remains very much focused on the primary goal, namely to see superfast broadband available countywide.

More information on other Stage 3 measures will be provided during 2017.

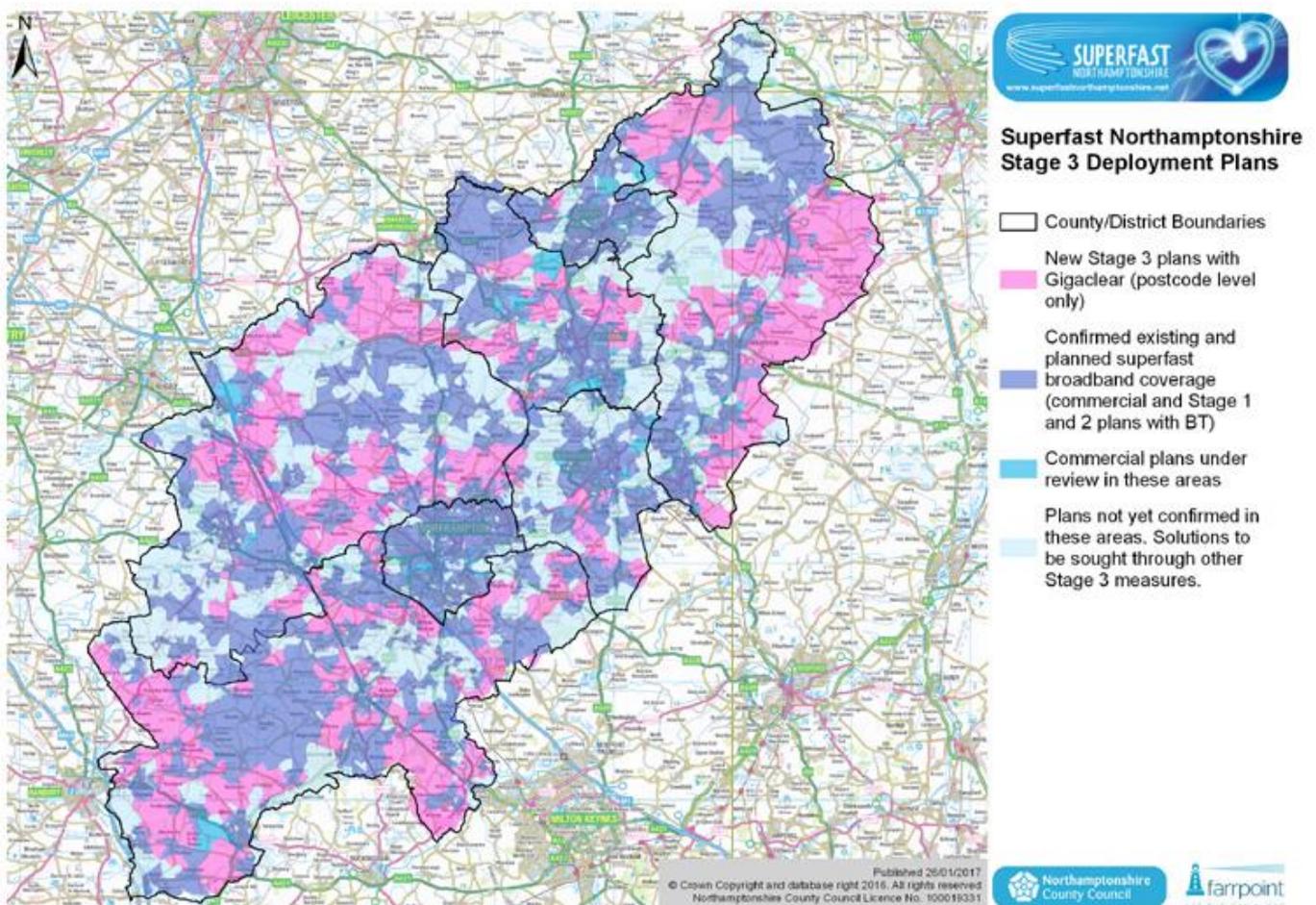
Ambitious local target has driven performance. Northamptonshire is one of the top performing projects nationally.

Superfast broadband plans extended to 97% by end 2017 and 98% by end 2018. Other Stage 3 measures to come.

Local performance substantially exceeds the Government's end of 2017 target to see 95% superfast coverage.

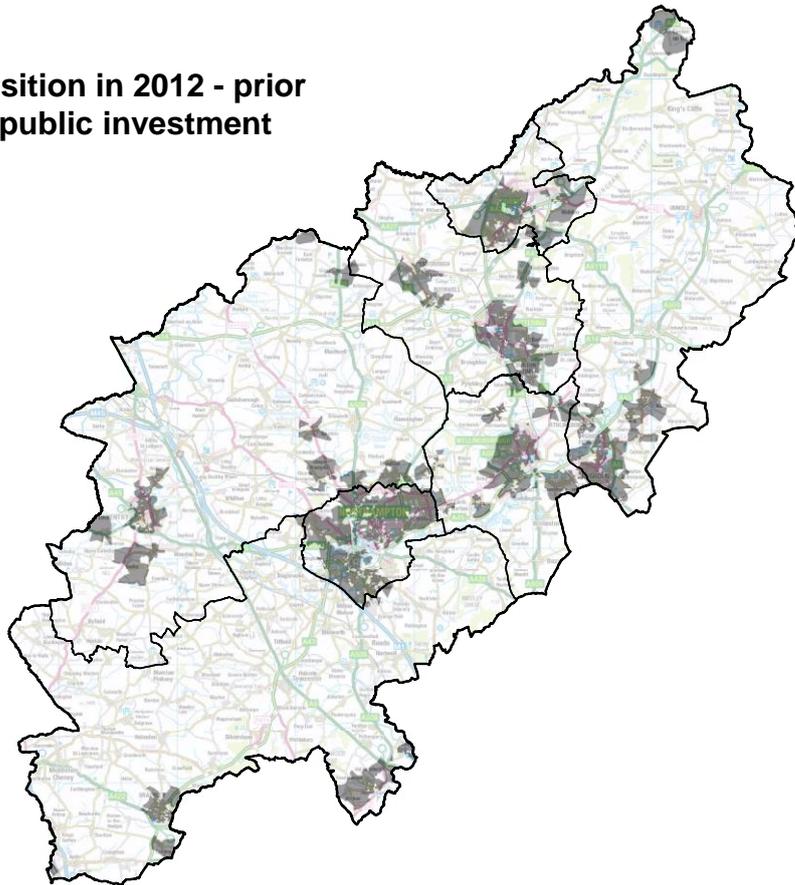
Substantial Superfast broadband plans now in place

Progress January 2017



The map shows the latest broadband plans secured with Gigaclear and their ultrasfast full fibre solution - this is the first of the Stage 3 measures to be confirmed. The substantial existing and planned Stage 1 and 2 superfast broadband coverage which is being delivered by BT, and commercial plans, are also shown. How the picture has changed since 2012 when the project began! So much has been achieved. The map below shows the extent of superfast broadband coverage back in 2012.

Position in 2012 - prior to public investment



16 December 2015

Legend

□ Northamptonshire District Boundaries

Extent of fibre broadband plans in county July 2012

■ Commercial Coverage
□ Areas left to serve

0 3.5 7 14 Kilometers



When and Where Update

Roll Out Headlines - January 2017

Superfast Northamptonshire Stages 1 and 2, working with BT

- ✓ Stage 1 of the Contract was completed by BT 3 months ahead of schedule and Stage 2 remains on track.
- ✓ More than 71,200 additional premises in the county have now been passed by fibre-based networks
- ✓ Of these, almost 62,000 premises can now access superfast broadband services (access line speeds above 24Mbps)

Superfast Northamptonshire Stage 3, working with Gigaclear

Two new contracts were signed with the telecoms provider Gigaclear in January 2017. Together these will provide a full fibre network service to over 6,300 additional premises and will bring ultrafast broadband to parts of rural Northamptonshire. Arrangements are being mobilised. Detailed planning and survey work will start shortly.

By the end of December 2016, Stages 1 and 2 of the Superfast Northamptonshire Project had provided access to superfast broadband (download speeds above 24Mbps) to almost 62,000 additional premises across the county. This represents a huge ambitious involving hundreds of miles of fibre optic cables and a substantial public / private sector investment approaching £20m. BT is the County Council's delivery partner for these first 2 stages of the project. Progress is good and remains on track.

Some of the latest areas to benefit include parts of Ashby St Ledger, Burton Latimer, Collyweston, Cransley, Duddington, Earls Barton, Eastcote, Great Harrowden, Lilbourne, Syresham, Upper Benefield and Whitfield.

You can find out more by going to the [Roll Out Schedule](#) on the project website. It provides information on areas where services are available and areas where services should be 'Coming Soon'. This lists will change as new cabinets and structures come forward into the schedule and as cabinets go 'Live'. The Coming Soon list is also updated to provide the latest position on expected delivery timescales - this means the timescales listing will change as they become firmer and closer to completion. This information is more detailed and updated regularly when compared to the timescales shown on the When and Where map. Information on Gigaclear's plans will be provided here too in due course.

Timescales can sometimes change and delays can be unavoidable if issues arise when building the network. The nature of issues can vary and include, for example, blocked underground ducts, difficulties securing permission to cross private land (a wayleave) or traffic management requirements. You can find out more in the [FAQ's](#).

Some of the areas due to be served in the next couple of months include Grafton Regis (cabinet Yardley Gobion 5), Potterspury (cabinet Yardley Gobion 1),

Overthorpe (cabinet Middleton Cheney 12) and Mears Ashby (cabinet Earls Barton 2). Keep an eye out for news on availability via the Roll Out Schedule.

If you're in an upgraded area, getting a faster fibre broadband service is not automatic. You need to contact your internet service provider (ISP) to ask about an upgrade or go online to compare offers available from different providers to find the best deal for you. You can find out more about how to take up a superfast broadband service by visiting the [Get Connected](#) page.

If you are resident in Overthorpe or Grafton Regis then gear up to go superfast! Services will be available to order very soon. Check out the Roll Out Schedule.

Strong take up performance continues

Take up in Northamptonshire in areas already served by BT and their network business Openreach for Stages 1 and 2 of the project collectively have exceeded 43% of premises passed. Northamptonshire was ranked in the top 3 of 44 BDUK projects nationally for take up performance in September 2016. Take up in areas served in Stage 1 has now topped 46%.

Take up of fibre broadband has topped 43% in areas now served.

Why not see if you can upgrade to a superfast fibre service?

News in Brief

Technology for Independent Living

Benefits of technology are endless. Technology can help everyone, whether in a personal or professional capacity. It has changed the vision of people and helped the development of any profession and field.

Technology can also help people live life as independently as possible. Superfast broadband is critical to making this possible. An assisted support service site in Northampton, comprising of ten individual flats has been awarded funding towards transforming the building into an assistive technology hub. Assistive technology solutions can be a great tool, allowing close support to residents whilst giving them independence.

Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) applied for funding via the Housing and Technology Capital Fund to help better support residents by using assistive technology solutions. The site managed by NCHA currently offers support services for people with learning disabilities, autism, mental health and sensory impairment.

Some of the ideas in the bid for funding included an alarm call system with pendants, digital telephony, a digital door entry system, laser beam sensors, epilepsy / seizure detectors and fall sensors. In addition, each resident will receive a SMaRT Messenger system - an innovative communication tool allowing messages and images to be delivered directly to the end users TV screen.

Government announces £440 million for broadband boost

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport announced an additional £440 million to help 600,000 extra homes and

businesses get superfast broadband in the hardest-to-reach parts of the UK.

The funding comes from a combination of efficiency savings, following careful contract management of the projects across UK through BT and additional release of funding from BT as a result of take-up of connections being significantly higher than anticipated.

Around 4.5million premises have been given access to superfast broadband through the Government's £1.7 billion Broadband Delivery UK rollout, with more than 1.5 million signing up for a faster connection. This has meant that more than 90 per cent of the UK now has access to superfast broadband, compared to 45 per cent in 2010.

[Read full Article](#)

Government commits to 'full fibre future'

The new Digital Minister, Matthew Hancock MP has stated he believes that "gigabit speeds" and pure fibre optic (FTTP/H) broadband connectivity are "the future". He has also been encouraging specific support for Alternative Network Providers (AltNets) to help deliver on this.

Mr Hancock is seeking to install a "gold standard" full fibre optic broadband in the UK and he has also announced a new Digital Infrastructure Fund (DIF) will be setup with around £400 million of public investment to help get it started, while the rest is expected to be matched by the private sector. It's hoped that the total public and private investment through the fund could even reach £1.5bn over the life of the scheme, which will run until 2021.

There will also be a fund that will allow local authorities to bid for a slice of £740 million, which is intended to help trial and roll-out future ultrafast 5G based Mobile Broadband networks

[Source: ISPReview](#)

How to Stay in Touch

To keep up to date with the latest news on the Superfast Northamptonshire project

Please visit the project site at:

www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net

or for further information please email:

bigidea@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Or by post please contact:

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