



SUPERFAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Update on the delivery of Superfast Broadband in Northamptonshire: March 2011

The first question people moving house often ask is about local broadband speeds and increasingly many jobs are only advertised online. Access to broadband is also a major determining factor in where businesses decide to locate. It is also becoming a more common way to access many public services. Access to Superfast Broadband is therefore crucial to Northamptonshire and its future prosperity. Because of this the County Council is looking to facilitate the roll out of superfast broadband to all premises in Northamptonshire. The purpose of this newsletter is to update you on this activity.

The Vision

Our vision is for Northamptonshire to be at the leading edge of the global digital economy. This means that a minimum two-thirds of premises should have access to broadband speeds in excess of 10mb/s by 2014 and at least 9 out of 10 premises should have this by 2015. By 2015 all premises should have access to the broadband at the national minimum speed of 2mb/s. By 2017 all premises should be able to access superfast broadband up to 100 mb/s products with a range of download and upload speeds available to meet requirements.

Current broadband access

Much of Northamptonshire is currently only served by up to 24mb/s connectivity that use traditional phone lines. This compares to speeds of up to 100mb/s in some other parts of the

country. In many parts of the county, even the in the towns, speeds are significantly slower than 24mb/s and some rural areas experience speeds of 0.5mb/s or even have no access to broadband. This makes access to some on-line services and running many types of business very difficult, or even impossible, in these areas. We want to change this.

BDUK

BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK) have been established by government to manage the roll out of Superfast broadband. £500m has been committed to 2015 to introduce superfast broadband across the country. A further £300m has been earmarked, if required, from 2015-2017. Its focus is the 'final third' where there is not an economic case for faster broadband and therefore where public funding is needed to enable better access.

Detailed guidance was issued by BDUK earlier this month to areas seeking funding. This included an invitation to submit a bid to BDUK by 18th April. Areas that are not ready to bid by this date will be able to submit when they are ready.



A Northamptonshire bid to BDUK

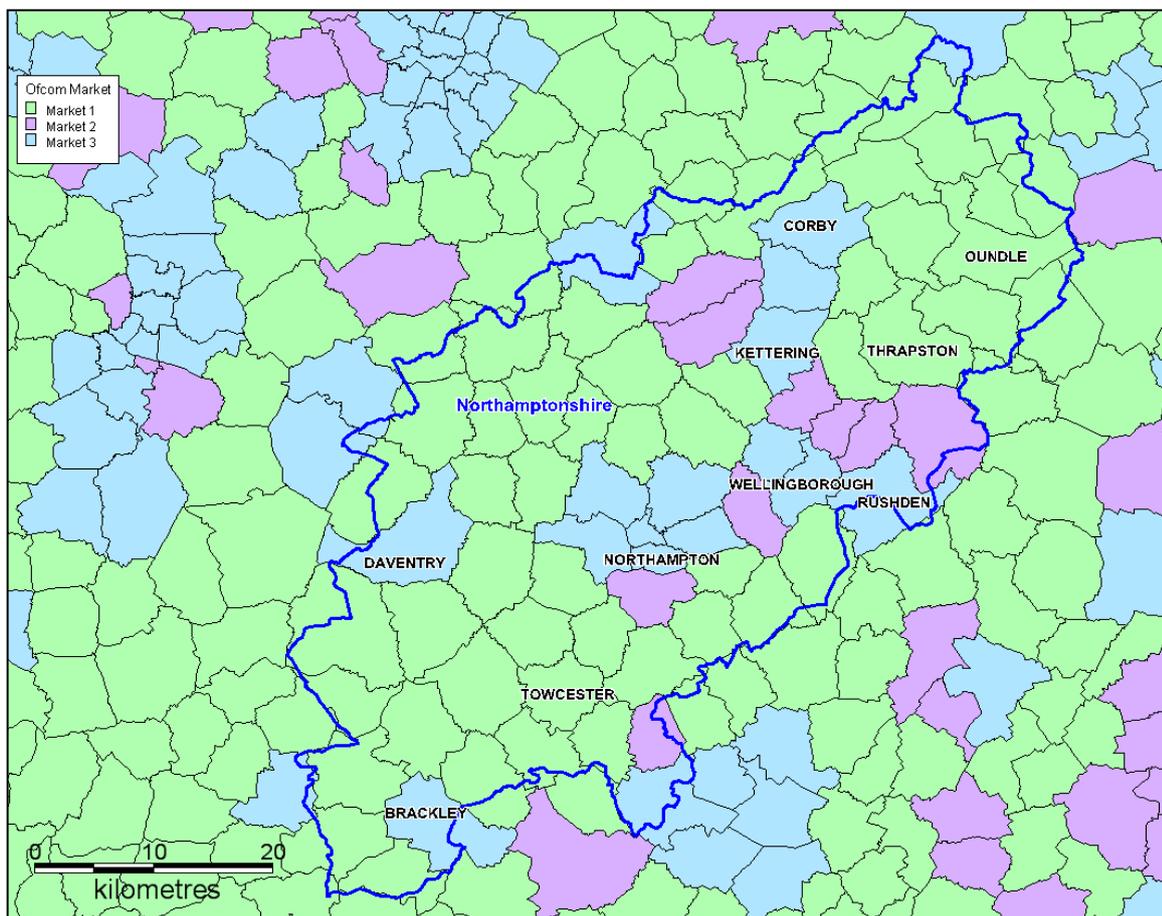
Northamptonshire County Council has met with BDUK advisors to discuss this guidance and their expectations. It intends to submit a bid to BDUK in April. For this to happen we are developing a broadband plan 'superfast Northamptonshire'.

This plan will provide the context for the bid to BDUK. It will outline why access to superfast broadband is essential. This will include the benefits it can bring to businesses and the local economy, the ability to improve access to entertainment, shopping etc. online, plans to stimulate demand, and how it can help transform the delivery of, and access to, public services particularly to those without easy access to transport and therefore help to reduce social exclusion. It will also outline synergies with other initiatives and investments, including those by the County Council as part of its move to a new target operating model.

In line with the BDUK guidelines, the bid itself will primarily focus on the parts of Northamptonshire where the market does not provide fast access. These are mainly in areas covered by Market 1 exchanges i.e. where there is only one supplier.

These Market 1 exchanges are in more rural areas. The plan and bid will need to include a strategy for rolling out access to these areas. This will be linked to the phasing of funding from BDUK. The bid will also look to improve access in Market 2 and 3 areas where speeds are poor and there is not an economic case for further investment without public support. To help us identify the issues in these areas, develop our strategy, and build our case we have initiated a broadband survey which can be accessed [here](#)

OFCOM EXCHANGE MAP FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



We have also set up a dedicated [web page](#) and blog site, which will be launched soon, for direct interaction with local communities, businesses and other interests. Through this we will be able to share information and case studies with interested parties and help to raise awareness and secure strong support for this initiative.

In addition to this, we have had meetings with representatives from the telecoms industry to help strengthen the economic case for upgrading existing exchanges at the earliest opportunity. This has included sharing information on concentrations of businesses and housing developments emerging through the planning system. To raise awareness, we helped to facilitate a stakeholder breakfast which was attended by local businesses, parish councils, further and higher education and public sector interests. We have also spoken separately to various parish councils, business representatives and neighbouring areas.

Over the coming weeks we will be pulling together all this information to develop an outline plan and a bid to BDUK. This will seek to ensure that Northamptonshire is one of the first areas to secure funding to accelerate and widen the roll out of superfast broadband.

Key milestones

7th April - Broadband survey ends and analysis of results begins

12th April - Northamptonshire County Council Cabinet considers the outline of a *Superfast Northamptonshire Plan* and the basis for a bid to BDUK

13th April - Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership Board considers outline plan and bid

18th April - Deadline for bid submission

April/May - Briefing for local MPs and MEPs

June - feedback from BDUK on the bid

Ongoing activity will include liaison with BDUK and the telecoms industry, further discussions with local business, parish councils, local residents networks, local authorities, the wider public sector and others.

Next edition

A further newsletter will be produced in April.

Contact

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