

## Special Business Edition

Ensuring local businesses maximise the benefits that superfast broadband can bring and boost their bottom line is a real opportunity for the Northamptonshire economy and is one of the key drivers for the Superfast Northamptonshire Project.

This edition of the Newsletter focuses on the help and opportunities that are available to Northamptonshire businesses to develop and grow with the advantages that superfast broadband brings. You can read about the recently launched Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme which provides grants to small and medium sized companies wanting to boost business with a faster broadband connection and find out more about how businesses benefitted from the County Council's INV-ENT Digital grant scheme.

This edition also includes advice from BT about making the right choice when deciding to upgrade your business broadband service as well as the latest news from WarwickNet and Virgin Media about their investment plans, guidance on cyber security and the latest roll out news from Superfast Northamptonshire.

**Time spend online by adults (over 16 years) has doubled in 10 years**

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**40% of small businesses said improved digital infrastructure in their area would encourage them to invest in new technology**

**2/3 of UK adults use the internet to buy goods or services, making the UK the biggest online shopping nation in the developed world. Telegraph May 2015**

#### DEAR READER

This is a **PLAIN TEXT VERSION** of our Newsletter. There are no photographs, illustrations, maps or graphics within it – it just contains the latest news in a simple format for anyone who has trouble downloading or printing our **FULL PUBLICATION VERSION** and for those Readers who may have difficulty reading text in colour. There may be some variances in content between both editions.

## Broadband Connection Voucher boost for Northamptonshire businesses

Great news for local businesses wanting to boost their bottom line. If you run a small or medium sized company (SME) in Northamptonshire then the Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme could benefit you. This is the latest initiative brought to you by the County Council through the Superfast Northamptonshire project.

The scheme offers SMEs a voucher (grant) of up to £3000 to upgrade to a much higher speed and more reliable broadband internet connection. The County Council has partnered with Coventry City Council to bring the scheme to Northamptonshire as part of the national Superfast Britain programme funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

£40m is available nationally up to the end of March 2016, subject to availability. Demand for the vouchers is growing quickly so make sure your business doesn't miss out on the opportunity to apply.

### What are the benefits to my business?

Doing business online with superfast broadband can bring real benefits to help your company grow. You can engage with customers and suppliers more easily and responsively via video conferencing, social media, upgraded websites and other shared applications. It can help increase productivity, raise staff morale and enable your business to access a bigger market place.

Businesses with faster broadband can:

- Grow and access new markets through better communication with customers
- Increase security through fast secure back-up of data
- Increase productivity while attracting and retaining the best staff

- Improve customer service by sending or uploading larger files faster
- Increase your bottom line by improving your customer satisfaction
- Future proof your business for the digital challenges of tomorrow
- Work in the cloud. Flexible storage with disaster recovery

### Whats's involved?

To apply for a broadband connection voucher you must be a SME with fewer than 250 employees, a registered charity, social enterprise or sole trader based in Northamptonshire. The voucher is a grant for installation costs – that is the capital and equipment costs of upgrading your broadband connection (it does not pay for VAT or ongoing monthly line rental and subscription costs payable to your chosen internet service provider).

Vouchers can cover fixed solutions such as fibre business packages. Ethernet or leased line connections or a wireless solution such as microwave broadband. If you are not sure what kind of broadband connection you should choose, a guide is available via the Superfast Northamptonshire project website which explains the options to help you decide what is best for your business.

“Superfast broadband improves the way we interact directly with our customers through Skype, video conferencing and remote hosting”  
– Rob Lewis – Total Sim – Brackley

It's quite easy to apply. First go to <http://superfastnorthamptonshire.net/business-voucher/> to find out more about the scheme and eligibility. If you believe you are eligible then go to the 'Apply here' link which will take you through the next steps. You will need to get a quote from a registered supplier on the scheme in order to complete an application – this may be for a bespoke connection solution for you or from a supplier offering a pre-registered broadband package.

You only have to submit one quote as part of your voucher application but you may want to speak to a few suppliers which have registered for the scheme so you can be confident that you are getting the best service and solution to meet your requirements. If you are not sure which suppliers to approach, you can register your interest on the Government's Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme 'Contact Me' page – your details will then be shared with all suppliers registered for the scheme to enable them to contact you directly to discuss your requirements (this doesn't guarantee that one or more suppliers will do so).

### **Can vouchers be pooled with other businesses?**

Yes...if your company is located on a business park, in an office block or another type of cluster alongside other businesses then you could consider pooling your vouchers to see if this secures a better solution from a registered supplier, and therefore a better outcome for you collectively. Each business would have to be eligible and apply in order to be approved for a voucher of up to £3000 (this does not mean that all businesses on the business park or office block have to participate but only those that do can be awarded a voucher (grant) to put towards a joint solution). A supplier would normally provide a quote for a solution which would service all the businesses participating and apportion eligible costs (up to £3000) to each business applying for a voucher. Each business will have its own contract with the supplier. In the case of a landlord controlled or managed multi-occupied site or building where the landlord/agent is in control of the broadband supply, they would secure a quote and ultimately contract with the supplier – the eligible installation costs would still be apportioned and individual business would apply for vouchers but the landlord/agent would also complete a joint application.

### **Broadband suppliers keen to support Northamptonshire voucher scheme**

Around 800 telecoms suppliers have registered for the scheme nationally so there is plenty of choice of services and packages to choose from when deciding on your connection upgrade package. You can find out which suppliers are registered by going to [www.connectionvouchers.co.uk/suppliers](http://www.connectionvouchers.co.uk/suppliers)

The telecoms market has responded well to the extension of the scheme from its usual city focus to include the whole of Northamptonshire. In the first two months alone as many as 18 different telecoms suppliers were involved in almost 60 voucher applications. These included:-

2 Circles Communications, Daisy, MetroNet, BDR Voice and Data, Eclipse, Midland Phone Services, Blue Global, Focus Group, Node4, BT, Genesis Telecom, TalkTalk, Cat5 Communications, Gigaclear, Virgin Media Business, Connect21, Incom Business Systems, WarwickNet.

To find out if your business is eligible and how to apply go to the 'Broadband Voucher' page on the project website at [www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net/business-voucher](http://www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net/business-voucher). If your application is approved, your voucher will be issued by Coventry City Council which is administering the scheme on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council.

You can download a leaflet about the scheme on the project website's Broadband Voucher page.

### **Local SMEs benefit from Vouchers worth over £65,000**

The Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme is already proving popular with Northamptonshire businesses since its launch

in the county on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. By the end of May, as many as 39 vouchers worth over £65,000 had been granted to local SEMs and a further 20 applications were in the pipeline. More local business are realising the benefits and taking advantage of the voucher opportunity whilst it's available.

Aniron Renewables, based in Horton, South Northamptonshire, was the first company in the county to take up a Broadband Connection Voucher. The company develops, finances, constructs and operates rooftop solar energy systems in the UK. They were granted the maximum voucher value of £3000 towards a broadband connection upgrade and they are using Virgin Media as their chosen supplier. The new service should be connected in the next month.

Sesh Diu, Owner of Aniron, regularly deals with business contacts in Singapore, India and USA. He explains how important having a superfast connection will be for his company's future.

*"Having superfast broadband to our premises will be transformational in the way we do our business. We have become very dependent on our internet connection since we do detailed design work for our rooftop solar projects that need to be reviewed on a regular basis by our investment partners from various parts of the world. We often have video conference calls and webex sessions that are quote a struggle with the internet connection we currently have. In fact our growth is somewhat restricted because we want to hire more system designers but they would obviously have an additional bandwidth requirement for the internet. The new faster fibre connection will mean that we can work much more efficiently and expand as a company as the demand for our services increases".*

Young Components Ltd based in Wollaston near Wellingborough has also secured a connection voucher to upgrade their service with Virgin Media. Young Components is part

of the Young Corporation and sells chair components to the UK market.

Other companies which were quick off the mark to benefit include Tasmin Design located at the Kettering Venture Park and Corby based company Cityfax on Weldon South Industrial Estate. New fibre broadband service are being supplied by WarwickNet.

Don't miss out on your chance to boost your bottom line. The Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme is available on a first come first served basis up to 31 March 2016.

To find out if your business is eligible and how to apply visit <http://superfastnorthamptonshire.net/business-voucher/>. Conditions apply.

Or email: [sccbroadband@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:sccbroadband@coventry.gov.uk)

Tel: 024 7683 1833

The above contact details are for enquiries about the Connection Voucher Scheme only. For all other enquiries about Superfast Northamptonshire please go to the project website or email:

[bigidea@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:bigidea@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

## **INV-ENT Digital Success**

INV-ENT Digital was launched by the County Council in November 2014 as a catalyst for the digital economy to help companies to use digital technology to improve how they do business and to do more business online. The scheme offered grant funding of up to £10,000 on a match fund basis to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Northamptonshire

Twenty four ambitious SMEs in the county have benefited from £190,000 grant funding and a combined public/private investment of

£1,075,000. These companies were looking to enhance their digital capacity and capability to grow and transform their business. The scheme has supported website development, augmented and 3D visualisations applications, mobile friendly applications, customer service systems and online order and payment capabilities. Collectively, these businesses have estimated that this joint public/private investment could create over 70 jobs in the county as a result of business growth.

Stockbridge Racing Ltd was one of the successful bidders. The company is based at the Silverstone Technology Centre and is a manufacturer of the leading Willans brand of motorsport safety equipment. It supplies a range of FIA approved safety harnesses and on-board fire suppression systems. They secure £7000 of INV-ENT Digital funding to invest in upgrading IT equipment and systems, new software, upgrading their website, and providing training for staff to improve their digital skills. The investment will enable Stockbridge Racing to increase the percentage of products sold directly to customers to increase margins and to improve customer service through the use of live chat and social media. Simon Perkins, Managing Director, said..

*“We are very excited to have been awarded the INV-ENT Digital grant which will assist us in improving our website and software capabilities and help us in creating two more skilled jobs at our facility at Silverstone”*

The family run Northampton Reptile Centre also benefitted. The business secured a grant of £10,000 to support its ambitions to provide a better customer experience online and to widen its customer base. This local reptile retail store specialises in captive bred reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates and offers enthusiasm and expertise to educate customers on quality of care and purchases. They have an online web store with over 2000 products for reptile and exotic pet keepers, ranging from reptile food to housing which are also available for home delivery. INV-ENT

Digital will enable them to upgrade their website to a responsive site which is mobile and multi-device compatible to improve the customer browsing experience, expand their product range and improve the conversion rate to sales. Louis Hook, Owner of Northampton Reptile Centre, commented that..

*“We can now move forward with our plans for providing a faster, more efficient and easy to use buying experience for our customers with our new website. The INV-ENT Digital Award has improved business and we are pleased to have already taken on an extra staff member. It is our intention to continue this growth in business and staff”*

### **Virgin Media – Announce landmark investment of £3bn in broadband infrastructure**

Virgin Media has announced that it is extending its network of fibre optic broadband to another four million homes and businesses which will extend its reach to around 17 million households across the UK. Known as ‘Project Lightning’, the plan is expected to take around five years to complete and involves a £3bn investment by the company.

If you are in an urban area where Virgin Media already has a presence but your street is not yet upgraded and you can’t get access to superfast broadband then click on the link below to register your interest via ‘Cable my street’. It only takes your postcode to get the process started.

Whilst it is likely that Virgin Media will concentrate its first investments in the larger cities, the extension of its network in other parts of the UK is expected to follow and it will be prioritising their expansion based on demand.

Virgin Media Business also offers a demand led ‘Cable My Business’ initiative and is one of the

registered suppliers for the Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme.

To find out if Virgin Media is in your area go to [www.virginmedia.com/cablemybusiness](http://www.virginmedia.com/cablemybusiness) for residential premises.

## **BT Openreach – Could Cloud Computing Help Your Business?**

Cloud computing is the ability to access services across the internet when and where you need them. This includes computing power, infrastructure, software applications and even collaboration tools.

Cloud computing has been around for many years, but its popularity has increased recently due to rising broadband speeds, making it more accessible to smaller businesses and more reliable than ever.

### **What benefits could cloud computing deliver for your business?**

**Access Latest Software Easily** – Getting software via the cloud allows anytime updates and the flexibility to choose the most cost effective supplier

**Greater Peace of Mind** – With a cloud based solution data can be backed up regularly and automatically

**Improve Data Security** – Give your company and customers confidence that their data is in safe hands with remote back-up, anti-virus and secure access

**Save Time and Work Faster** – Downloads will take a fraction of the time saving time and energy costs

**Expand – when you are ready** – Getting your computing power and software on a 'per-user' basis means you never pay for more than you need

**Reduce Admin Time** – Take away the costs of upgrades and server maintenance – as part of the service, cloud based solutions get

upgraded, supported and managed – saving time

**Work More Flexibly** – Putting your computing power on the Cloud means it can be accessed by tablet, laptop or smart phone

**Help The Planet** – Reduce your company carbon footprint – reduce business travel costs and energy bills as remote hosting is cheaper than power hungry servers

## **BT Advice on Business Connectivity**

Business is all about communication. Are you making the right choice about connectivity for your business?

Fibre broadband can open doors to new opportunities, fresh ways of connecting with customers – and potential customers – and it can cope as business needs develop and grow. In today's digital economy, faster broadband is essential.

You can talk to colleagues, clients and partners on high quality real-time video calls. Use shared online workspaces to take collaborative working to a whole new level. Take advantage of hosted applications to reduce software and licensing costs. Combine all this with the 'access from anywhere' benefits of online data storage and you'll dramatically reduce the cost of computer hardware and make your employees more agile too!

Openreach, the BT group business responsible for delivering fibre, have created a helpful and short on-line video for businesses deciding on their future broadband connectivity needs. This includes advice on what to consider when upgrading to a fibre broadband or possible Ethernet service. BT Openreach also offers a whole host of online information including case studies and real life benefits that fibre broadband could provide for your business. Go to <http://www.superfast-openreach.co.uk/for-business/> to find out more.

You can also hear from Northamptonshire businesses already taking advantage of superfast broadband and the benefits they are seeing as a result, by going to the 'Benefits' page on Superfast Northamptonshire website.

**BT is an approved supplier for the Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme.**

## **WarwickNet – Getting businesses connected – WarwickNet extends its Fibre Rollout**

WarwickNet is a rapidly growing, Independent Internet Service Provider that specialises in delivering high speed connectivity solutions to businesses located on business parks, industrial estates and multi-tenancy buildings.

The company has an extensive presence on a large number of business parks and industrial estates throughout the wider Midlands where they deliver superfast broadband high-capacity leased lines. WarwickNet extended its network into Northamptonshire last year.

Corbygate Business Park was one of the first business parks to be served by WarwickNet back in July 2014, closely followed by Weldon North Industrial Estate.

One of the companies sited on Corby Gate Business Park that approached WarwickNet to resolve their slow broadband issues was PAGEotechnical. The company specialises in the management and risk reduction of contaminated land. They are heavily reliant on using cloud-based IT to provide engineered solutions and were finding that their limited broadband speed was affecting their day-to-day processes and performance.

Stuart Duffy, Supply chain manager at PAGEotechnical said:

*“We rely upon a fast connection to download large land plans. The support we have had from WarwickNet has meant that the speed has dramatically increased which has had a huge impact upon our productivity. We are no longer waiting for the images to download. In the past this would have taken several minutes, or even longer. Now it is instantaneous”*

To service the business park, WarwickNet built its own roadside fibre cabinet by the estate. Not only does it supply superfast broadband, it provides high-speed leased lines and voice solutions such as VoIP helping businesses to maximise their potential.

WarwickNet are now extending their plans in the county to serve other business parks and estates in the Corby, Kettering and Northampton area, including Corby Business Centre, Willowbrook Industrial Estate and Weldon South in Corby. Kettering Venture Park is their first site to go live in Kettering and Telford Way Industrial Estate is now also being served.

Plans are coming forward at Brackmills in Northampton and Grange Park business park. It is anticipated that a dozen or so business parks and industrial estates will be served by the end of 2015.

For those 'techy' readers amongst you, you may be interested to know that WarwickNet have also just announced they will be introducing 'vectoring' on their network in Northamptonshire. Vectoring uses advanced mathematics and analysis of noise conditions to eliminate as much as possible the speed loss caused by high frequency cross talk from other VDSL2 lines in the same bundle. This means those that have seen speeds drop as more people join will get back those speeds. WarwickNet says this will allow them to sell up to 100Mbps download speeds and up to 40Mbps uploads.

Ben King, Chief Executive of WarwickNet said:

*“We have built a strong reputation in and around our Midlands base, but the Northamptonshire initiative was a business opportunity that takes us into a new level of county-wide service that not only adds value to the business recipients of superfast broadband, but also to the council taxpayers of Northamptonshire who benefit from the service at no cost, ahead of many other counties in the UK. We are pleased to be working with forward-thinking local authorities such as Northamptonshire County Council to help businesses such as PAGeotechnical.”*

For more information on WarwickNet and superfast broadband call 024 7699 7222 or visit [www.warwicknet.com](http://www.warwicknet.com). You can also find out how WarwickNet deliver their services to business parks by watching their video at <http://bit.ly/1sC3RVq>

## **Cyber Security – How Protected is Your Business?**

The Internet ‘Cyberspace’ has transformed how we live, learn and work. With more than 2 billion users, the internet is powering economic growth and there are significant benefits for businesses able to optimise digital technology and superfast broadband. With opportunities there is also risk – are you managing yours?

Is your business effectively managing its cyber security and protecting your information assets? This should be a consideration for all businesses, large or small.

The Government, working with the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure, has developed a Guide to Cyber Security for Business to help businesses protect themselves in cyberspace.

## **More than half of funds stolen through cybercrime will never be recovered**

**MyDoom was the fastest spreading e-mail worm ever and the most expensive, causing damage worth over \$38.5billion**

For more information go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-risk-management-a-board-level-responsibility>

## **When and Where Update**

Good news for thousands more people in the county as another 48 new fibre cabinets enabling over 7000 more premises to take up superfast broadband (download speeds above 24Mbp) have gone live since the last Newsletter published in March 2015.

Since February 2014, when Communications Minister Ed Vaizey joined the County Council and BT in Towcester to mark the launch of the first cabinet delivered through the project, a total of 209 new cabinets have been built and around 420km of fibre optic cable has been laid – that’s almost the distance from London to Newcastle upon Tyne.

By 1<sup>st</sup> June, fibre coverage has now reach around 47,600 premises. Without public funding from the County Council and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, these premises would not be benefitting from access to faster broadband services.

Since March 2015, cabinets serving the communities of Chacombe, Kilsby, Marston St Lawrence and Greatworth have gone live.

Please go to the Roll Out page and When and Where map on the project website to find out more.

Remember that if you're in an upgraded area, getting a faster fibre broadband service is not automatic. You need to contact your internet service provider to ask about an upgrade or go online to compare offers available from different providers. To buy a fibre broadband service you normally need to have a minimum access line speed of around 15Mbps. You can check this using BT's Wholesale ADSL Availability Checker.

## **Superfast Broadband comes a step closer for the Enterprise Zone**

Openreach, the BT group business responsible for delivering fibre, is pushing ahead with the network build for the first stage of the project. This is good news for many businesses due to benefit in the Northamptonshire Waterside Enterprise Zone. Over the next couple of months, you will soon see new fibre cabinets (green boxes) appearing on roadsides in and around the EZ area – these will service the EZ along with the other parts of Northampton.

The 'Standing' of a new fibre cabinet on the roadside happens early on in the network build process so there is still much work to be done before the network is completed and ready to support services. You can find out more about this on the 'Network Build and Technologies' section on the project website FAQ's page.

The network build which will serve much of the EZ is expected to be completed by December 2015. Solutions for areas in the EZ not served by these plans will be pursued through future stages of the project. More news on the project's next steps will be reported later in the year.

## **Coming Soon... New Look Project Website**

If you're keen to know more about the Superfast Northamptonshire Broadband roll

out programme, you will be pleased to hear that a new look website is on its way.

The new site will continue to provide the huge amount of information already available but will also include even more detailed plans on what's happening in the network build and will see a new 'When and Where map' available. This should be easier to use and will be mobile friendly. We will also be mapping where the new fibre cabinets are located which have been deployed through the project. You can already see a list of where the new fibre cabinets have been deployed on the Roll Out page.

Whilst providing more information, we do ask people to remember that deployment plans can change in any particular locality because sometimes Openreach have to manage unforeseen issues during the network build which are unavoidable and can cause delays, like blockages underground for example. The flip side is that to keep the project on target, other localities may come forward more quickly.

Keep an eye out for the new look website which is expected to be launched over the summer.

## **What is BT delivering with Public Investment in the First Two Stages of the Project?**

At the beginning of June 2015, Stage One of the project had progressed to around 90% completion and has remained on track throughout.

Fibre to the Cabinet is the main technology being deployed in Stage One of the project by BT but they are also providing some Fibre to the Premise solutions where needed.

**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](http://www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net)

or for further information please email:

[bigidea@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:bigidea@northamptonshire.gov.uk) or by post

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