



SUPERFAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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

This is the second newsletter produced by Northamptonshire County Council on the *superfast Northamptonshire* project. It outlines the content of the recent bid which has been made to central government to enable access to superfast broadband across the whole of Northamptonshire. It also includes information on how you can support the bid, and the next stages in this exciting project.

Superfast broadband. £530m has been committed to March 2015 to introduce superfast broadband across the country. A further £300m has been earmarked, if required, from April 2015 to March 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 attract private sector investment and enable better access.

Why does Northamptonshire need access to Superfast Broadband?

Access to superfast broadband across Northamptonshire is essential to businesses, for education, for entertainment and increasingly for accessing many public services. It can also help to reduce social exclusion and help people retain their independence for longer. It is therefore crucial to future prosperity and well-being.

Results from the recent online survey carried out by Northamptonshire County Council involving over 1,000 respondents showed that over 50% of respondents had an average speed of less than 2Mbps, with less than 5% of respondents having an average speed of over 10Mbps. More than 74% of businesses that responded thought that an improved connection was required to support their business and that their current connection was inadequate.

BDUK

BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK) have been established by central government to manage the roll out of

The Superfast Northamptonshire bid

The *superfast Northamptonshire* project bid was submitted to BDUK on 18th April. This bid will be competing with a number of others for funding. More local authorities will also be bidding for funding in the coming months.

The vision behind the Northamptonshire bid is that everyone is able to access improved services via superfast broadband and for the county to be at the leading edge of the global digital economy. Baseline speeds have been set out in the bid, but it is anticipated that the technology will enable speeds of at least 40Mbps to be achieved and the norm. This represents genuine superfast broadband. The target is to deliver this vision by 2017.

Superfast Northamptonshire



The total investment needed to deliver superfast broadband for Northamptonshire is in excess of £100m. However, a large proportion of this investment will be provided by private telecoms providers taking advantage of commercially viable opportunities. For example, BT has announced that it plans to upgrade 16 exchanges in the county and a further 5 located outside, but serving, the county using fibre to the cabinet technology by the end of 2012. Further announcements are expected by BT and other providers.

The bid therefore focuses on providing better broadband access to areas where it would not be commercially viable to private sector providers. This covers over 60,000 premises. Through this project, the County Council wants to find a private sector telecoms provider to act as a partner to co-invest in superfast broadband in these areas. BDUK funding will be used as 'gap funding'.

The bid estimates that the total cost of completing broadband coverage to these 'un-commercial' areas is about £33.6m. The bid to BDUK is for £13.3m with the balance of £20.3m being the expected private sector contribution to be secured through a competitive tender process. This level of match funding is based on guidance and intelligence from various discussions and experience elsewhere.

In response to BDUK guidelines, the bid has been divided into three bands.

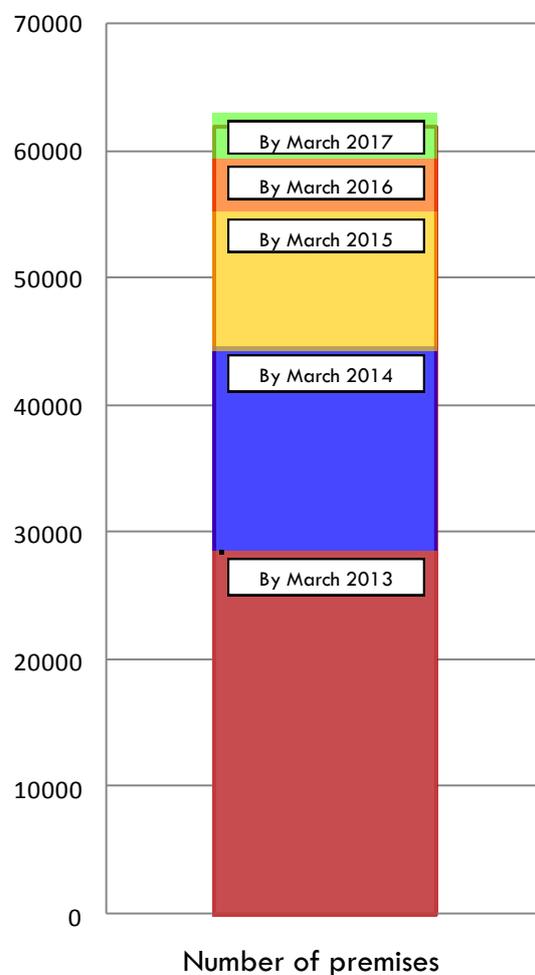
- Band 1 contains over 35,000 residential premises and almost 1,500 commercial premises. The 14 exchange areas that would be initially in this band are: Broughton, Byfield, Kislingbury, Middleton Cheney, Weedon, Long Buckby, Brixworth, Towcester, Silverstone, Roade, Bozeat, Thrapston, Oundle, and Wansford. If the bid is successful, all these exchanges would be upgraded by March 2014.
- Band 2 contains almost 16,000 residential premises and 500 commercial premises, and will focus on

larger villages in the remaining exchange areas and those communities with a school. These upgrades would be completed by March 2015.

Band 3 contains over 7,600 residential premises and 500 commercial premises in the remaining more rural 'hard to get' areas where the cost of providing connectivity would be highest. The target is that these upgrades would be completed by 2017.

It is important to note that these bands (and their scope) are indicative at this stage and may be refined through the tender process following discussions with the private sector and local communities.

Goals (premises with upgraded access)



Expected benefits

Quantifiable benefits from the project (and how they will be measured) are as follows:

Transformed public services

- Increased usage of public sector websites
- More public services transformed through broadband technology access

Helping people to help themselves and reduced social exclusion

- Increased geographical coverage in excess of 2Mbps
- Increased geographical coverage in excess of 40Mbps
- Increase in take-up of broadband users (business and domestic)

Lower carbon emissions

- Increased home working / teleworking
- Scale of impact of Local Sustainable Transport Fund initiatives which are technology enabled

An enabled, enterprising and innovative growing business sector

- Numbers of new business start ups / new business inward investments where availability of superfast broadband was cited as a key factor influencing the decision to locate in the county (by business survey and Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership inward investment and business enquiry work)
- Increased satisfaction from business (measured by business survey)
- Broadband technology enabled improvements to business performance, productivity and innovation (measured by business survey)

Improved skills and educational attainment

- Increase in numbers and quality of graduates completing Computer Science / IT technology discipline degree courses

- Increase in broadband enabled technology training undertaken by employees (measured by business and public sector survey)

Critical success factors

BDUK guidelines suggest that a number of factors are critical to the success of the bid. These include the role of broadband in improving the delivery of local services, local match funding, plans to stimulate demand (and therefore increase the impact of any investment), and wider engagement. The bid addresses all these factors.

The County Council has earmarked funding within existing resources for a small project team and specialist technical advice and other support. Other investment has been identified which complements the project. This includes investment in the County Councils 'channel shift' initiative which has a target of shifting a further 20% of transactions from the phone to the web by March 2012. This will create savings of £85k.

To help this to happen, more and more services will be able to be accessed via the internet.

Once the outcome of the bid is clear a decision will be taken by the County Council on any further future potential investment to provide additional match funding. This decision will be informed by a number of factors including likely enhanced benefits and return on investment.

Further discussions will also take place with other local partners.

The project has already attracted considerable interest from local communities, businesses, the media and others. This includes interest in the on-line survey and expressions and /or letters of support from a range of people and organisations including;

- local MPs
- University of Northampton
- Northampton College
- Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership

Superfast Northamptonshire: April 2011

- Daventry District Council
- East Northamptonshire Council
- Northampton Borough Council
- Borough of Wellingborough Council
- Institute of Directors
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Chamber of Commerce
- St Andrews Hospital
- St Johns Ambulance

And a range of local businesses including;

- Rockingham Castle Estate
- Silverstone Circuits
- Carlsberg
- Rolton Group
- Wincanton plc

Support has also been received from the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (representing 180 town and parish councils), Northamptonshire ACRE (the rural community council) and a number of individual parish councils.

How I can support the bid?

If you have not already recorded your support for this bid, and would like to, you can write to:

Kevin Hanlon
 BDUK
 Department for Culture, Media and Sport
 2-4 Cockspur Street
 London
 SW1Y 5DH
kevin.hanlon@culture.gsi.gov.uk

and/or

Ed Vaisey MP
 Minister for Culture, Communications & Creative Industries
 Department for Culture, Media and Sport
 2-4 Cockspur Street
 London
 SW1Y 5DH
askedvaisey@culture.gsi.gov.uk

Key Dates

June 2011	Notification of successful bids
January 2012	End of competitive dialogue process
April 2012	Preferred private sector partner selected
July 2012	Implementation commences

Contact

For further information, please contact:
 Llewelyn Morgan on (01604) 236268 or
lmorgan@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Next edition

The next edition of this newsletter will be produced in June 2011. This will provide an update on the bid (including the feedback from BDUK) and outline how local communities and others can get involved and receive more detailed updates.

