

Connecting Devon and Somerset

Member Briefing October, 2015



Programme update:

Phase 1 (90% coverage)

- **217,000 premises connected**
- **Ahead of schedule for 90% superfast coverage**
- **Programme two thirds complete**
- **Over 30% take up in areas live for over a year**

This phase of the roll-out is ahead of schedule and two-thirds complete. Connecting Devon and Somerset's (CDS) quarterly targets are being met by BT. By the end of September nearly 217,000 premises across Devon and Somerset had been connected to the BT fibre network (the target was 207,000). Of these, around 185,000 homes and businesses have the capability to access superfast broadband speeds of 24Mbps and over.

CDS is well set to achieve the Government's target to provide an average of 90% of homes and businesses across Devon and Somerset with access to superfast broadband by the end of 2016.

Take up (people using broadband services) is over 30% in publicly-funded roll-out areas that have been live for over a year. The average across the CDS programme is 18% and rising.

Phase 2 (95% coverage)

- **Considerable industry appetite to contract with CDS**
- **Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) working to secure EU State Aid approval**
- **Early State Aid clearance vital to contract start**

Early discussions with broadband suppliers have been completed. CDS met with 15 potential suppliers over the summer and it has been extremely valuable in shaping the invitation to tender. It is clear there is considerable appetite in the industry for opportunities to contract with CDS and offering a range of technologies including fibre and wireless.

As a result CDS is launching the **Open Market Review** (OMR) stage of the procurement on Monday (Oct 12). The OMR is vital to ensure tax-payers' money is spent where it is needed and is required for **State Aid approval**. CDS will plot an updated map of commercial broadband areas by gathering information from suppliers about their current network build and future deployment plans over the next 3 years. This will identify any areas that won't be covered commercially and therefore eligible for public funding in phase 2.

A draft map will be published in December for public consultation. CDS will be seeking views on the accuracy of any proposed intervention area.

Subject to **State Aid clearance**, CDS would like to launch the invitation to tender in February with a view to having contracts in place by June 2016.

The Government's Broadband Delivery UK agency (BDUK) is working closely with CDS and the European Commission to secure **State Aid clearance** for the phase 2 programme. The earlier this can be achieved the earlier CDS can launch its invitation to tender. BDUK has beefed up its team with an additional member of staff to help with the workload.

Phase 2 Dartmoor and Exmoor

- **Survey work underway**
- **Excellent co-operation with landowners**

Work has commenced to begin the delivery of the phase 2 contract for the National Parks.

The delivery partner for Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park areas, Airband, has completed its survey work on Dartmoor and is due to complete on Exmoor in mid-October. On the ground survey work has included face to face meetings with farmers on the moors, South West Water and the Forestry Commission. Airband has reported an excellent level of co-operation throughout, with landowners very willing to grant wayleaves for the infrastructure required to build the wireless network. Once survey work has completed in mid-October the next step will be to produce a rollout map for the National Parks, and then commence the first stage of the build.

CDS anticipates the first premises will be able to connect to this service in early 2016.

Business Parks Boost

- **Survey work launched at 20 business parks**

Survey work is underway for 20 business parks that have been added into the current BT contract for phase one of the roll-out. This means that over 1,000 additional businesses will have access to superfast broadband by the end of 2016.

The business parks that will benefit are:

Woodlands and Express Park	Colley Lane	Winkleigh
Lakeside Park	Yeovil	Morlands
Dunkeswell	Pathfields	Greendale
Pitts Cleave	Deane Gate	Bowdens
Crown Industrial	Cockington	Hither Green
Weston Business Quarter	Marsh Barton	Lee Mill
Millber	Yalberton	

CDS to bid for Ultrafast Funds

- **£4m bid to boost businesses**

In response to the £10 million for ultrafast broadband (100mbps and above) in the South West announced in the Budget, CDS intend to submit a competitive bid for £4 million to provide targeted broadband access with a focus on key business locations.

Connecting Devon and Somerset Audit

- **Clean bill of health from independent auditors**

Between April 2015 and September 2015 a mid-term evaluation of the Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme was conducted by the independent Devon Audit Partnership. The objective of this audit was to provide assurance that the Connecting Devon & Somerset Superfast Broadband programme is being effectively managed and delivered. It included a review of:

- Governance and reporting arrangements.
- Project board & team structures, including roles and responsibilities.
- The risk management strategy and risk management processes.
- Contract management & monitoring arrangements.
- The Communications Strategy

The review concluded that CDS is operating at a high standard with systems and controls in place that adequately mitigate exposure to the risks identified. The system is being adhered to and substantial reliance can be placed upon the procedures in place. There were no issues requiring action.

About Connecting Devon and Somerset

Councils and other organisations across Devon and Somerset are working together to bring faster broadband to the area and deliver improved broadband for rural Devon and Somerset – the “final third” – rural areas that are unlikely to benefit from commercial investment in broadband.

The Connecting Devon and Somerset project covers Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council, and North Somerset Council areas.

In 2011 the programme secured £32 million of funding from the Government agency Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and both Somerset and Devon County Councils put in £10 million each. Further funding from Bath and North East Somerset Council brought the public sector total close to £53 million.

In 2014 BDUK announced a further £22.75m allocated to the CDS programme to support the extension of superfast broadband coverage to 95 per cent of premises nationally. This has been matched locally, which means the programme has over £45 million further to invest in bringing superfast broadband to the area including the National Parks which are already underway.

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