



**SUPERFAST
BRITAIN**



News Release

4 October 2013

Berkshire signs up for more superfast broadband in £8 million deal



Members of the six Berkshire unitary councils leading on the 'Superfast Berkshire' project and the Local Enterprise Partnership have signed a contract with BT that will see high-speed fibre broadband becoming available to around 91 per cent of premises across the county by the end of September 2015.

The contract represents a step forward for the Berkshire project and another key stage in the government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) programme. There to mark the signing on Friday were Ed Vaizey, Government Communications Minister; David Burbage, Chair of the group representing the county's six unitary councils, and Bill Murphy, BT's Managing Director Next Generation Access. Other dignitaries included Steve Lamb, Chairman of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP), representatives from the six councils, and members of the Superfast Berkshire project board.

On completion, Superfast Berkshire will make fibre broadband available to an additional 18,000 premises over the next two years. This builds on the existing commercial programmes of BT and other suppliers who will have already provided coverage for 87 per cent of Berkshire.

Fibre to the Cabinet will be the main technology deployed. This can deliver wholesale downstream speeds of up to 80Mbps, and upstream speeds of up to 20Mbps. Fibre to the Premises technology – delivering ultra-fast wholesale speeds of up to 330Mbps – will also be deployed in certain areas and will be available on demand should local businesses want the ultra-fast speeds it offers.¹

Additionally, the project aims to ensure that everyone in Berkshire has access to a minimum 2Mbps broadband speed. This will be achieved by extending fibre and using other technologies, such as satellite, in some of the more rural parts of the county.

The Superfast Berkshire project will bring considerable economic and social benefits through faster internet access. A number of areas in the county are currently experiencing slow speeds which can often hamper business expansion and social cohesion. Superfast Berkshire aims to overcome that.

The £8.06 million project is receiving £2.03m investment from BDUK, and £2.03m from Berkshire's local authorities and TVBLEP. BT is contributing £4m to see the scheme delivered.

BT plans to start surveying across Berkshire from early 2014 before embarking on the network build during 2014 and 2015. Delivery will be completed over five phases with connections made to the first premises predicted for autumn 2014.

More than 10,000 Berkshire residents and businesses registered their interest in receiving superfast broadband following a successful communication campaign involving local parishes.

The Superfast Berkshire team will continue to work with BDUK and BT to secure additional funding to enable fibre broadband coverage to be extended even further.

At the contract signing, Councillor David Burbage speaking for the Superfast Berkshire project, said: "For many people living and working in rural areas, this is an important day. It gives them confidence that more 21st century technology is within reach and that they will soon be able to enjoy the benefits of faster access to the internet – benefits that some other people have had for some time."

Communications Minister Ed Vaizey said: "Today's contract signing marks the start of a remarkable transformation of Broadband services throughout Berkshire. By September 2015, thousands more Berkshire homes and businesses will have access to superfast speeds, and all the benefits that it offers. The UK already does more business online than any other European country and widespread access to superfast speeds will provide a welcome boost to Berkshire's economy."

Bill Murphy, Managing Director of Next Generation access for BT, added: "This is great news for the people living in these areas of Berkshire. It is important to support local economies, as well as helping new development and infrastructure in these communities. This is where fibre broadband can play an essential role by revitalising towns, villages and hamlets, helping businesses to be connected in these locations."

END

For further information, contact Keith Ulyatt, Public Relations Manager, West Berkshire Council. Tel: 01635 519125 email: kulyatt@westberks.gov.uk or BT regional press office on 0800 085 0660. All BT news releases can be accessed at: <http://www.bt.com/newscentre>

Notes to editors

¹80Mbps and 330Mbps are wholesale speeds. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) may use different speeds in their advertising. Individual line speeds will depend on network infrastructure and the service chosen by the ISP.

Openreach has started to make FTTP on demand available in its fibre footprint. Openreach will levy an installation charge but it will be up to service providers to decide whether they pass that onto businesses or consumers wishing to take advantage of the product.

About BT

BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications services and solutions, serving customers in more than 170 countries. Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to its customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband and internet products and services and converged fixed/mobile products and services. BT consists principally of four lines of business: BT Global Services, BT Retail, BT Wholesale and Openreach.

For the year ended 31 March 2013, BT Group's reported revenue was £18,103m with reported profit before taxation of £2,315m.

British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group plc and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.

For more information, visit www.btplc.com

BDUK

Superfast Britain is a Government programme of investment in broadband and communication infrastructure across the UK. Run by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, this investment helps businesses to grow, creates jobs and will

make Britain more competitive in the global race. The portfolio is comprised of three elements:

- £780m to extend superfast broadband to 95 per cent of the UK by 2017
- £150m to provide high speed broadband to businesses in 22 cities
- £150m to improve quality and coverage of mobile phone and basic data network services

Administered on behalf of the Government by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), Superfast Britain is transforming Britain by promoting growth, enabling skills and learning, and improving quality of life.

For further information: <https://www.gov.uk/broadband-delivery-uk>