

Superfast Berkshire achieves £20m investment in superfast broadband taking county coverage above 95%

Superfast Berkshire has signed contracts with Gigaclear and Call Flow Solutions to expand superfast broadband in the Berkshire districts of West Berkshire and Windsor & Maidenhead.



Gigaclear will deploy ultrafast Fibre-to-the-Premise (FTTP) technology to more than 11,700 premises across West Berkshire, enabling these homes and businesses to access broadband speeds of 50Mbps and up to 1000Mbps.

Superfast coverage is now set to rise from around 65% delivered under the commercial roll out of the private sector to in excess of 99% once Superfast Berkshire's contracted delivery is completed. Phase 1 of the project is expected to be completed by BT in September 2015 (taking initial coverage to 83%) and will now be followed by further expansion under Phase 2 into the most difficult to reach areas by Gigaclear.

This contract is set to fill in virtually all gaps in the remaining intervention area across the most rural parts of the county bringing high speed broadband to the areas that were disappointed to have missed out under Phase 1.

The combination of funding from Broadband Delivery UK, West Berkshire District Council, and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership of around £3.7m and the contribution of £16m from Gigaclear will provide a total investment fund of almost £20m.

After an initial period of planning, Gigaclear expect to begin work on the construction of the new infrastructure in November 2015, with the first customers expected to gain access to new broadband services before the end of the year. The deployment is expected to be completed by the middle of 2017.

Roger Croft, West Berkshire's Executive Member for ICT said: "Broadband is vital to the rural economy as well as rural residents quality of life. This is the next phase of bringing superfast broadband to residents and small businesses in West Berkshire following completion of the commercial areas.

"The impending completion of Phase 1 and this new contract with Gigaclear will mean that more than 99% of premises in West Berkshire will have superfast broadband capability. I am looking forward to working with Gigaclear to bring West Berkshire residents, rural schools and businesses the broadband service that people need and want in today's world. "

Matthew Hare, Chief Executive of Gigaclear, said: "Our focus is entirely on providing the best and most reliable broadband service in the country to rural areas around the UK. We have worked hard alongside the Berkshire Superfast team to reach this milestone for West Berkshire. It will be of enormous benefit to homes and families, who can enjoy entertainment, gaming and communication over the Internet at phenomenally fast speeds. For businesses, the faster speeds will improve their competitiveness both within the UK and abroad."



Call Flow Solutions will provide a Fibre-to-the-Cabinet (FTTC) solution to eleven new cabinets in Windsor & Maidenhead, expanding superfast broadband with speeds above 30 Mbps to in excess of 1,750 additional premises (residential and business).

This contract is targeting upgrades principally on the Windsor and Wraysbury exchange but is also expecting to address areas around Burchett's Green and Horton. This will increase superfast coverage by a further 2.7% but due to a reduction in the originally planned commercial coverage by the private sector, RBWM is expected to stand at around 92.7% superfast coverage.

The combination of funding from Broadband Delivery UK, The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership of £415,000 is being supported with a contribution of £120,000 from Call Flow Solutions. Planning will start in July and delivery is expected to be completed by mid 2016.

Andy Conibere, Managing Director of Call Flow said: "We are delighted to be chosen to bring FTTC to eleven new cabinets in Windsor & Maidenhead. Working in such an urban environment, our aim is to deliver superfast broadband, whilst causing

minimum civil engineering disruption and in the shortest possible time. We remain optimistic that the proposed projects in Reading and Wokingham will also be given the green light in the near future.”

Cllr Phill Bicknell, Deputy Cabinet Chairman for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead said: “I am really excited about this partnership with Call Flow Solutions and other neighbouring councils and look forward to seeing how it can transform technology in Windsor and Maidenhead and the surrounding areas.”

Additional bids under Phase 2 were also received for Reading and Wokingham from Call Flow Solutions but due to a technicality, it was not possible to get these contracts authorised under the EU State Aid requirement before the deadline of 30th June 2015.

In addition to Gigaclear and Call Flow, superfast broadband is also being expanding across a number of Berkshire Business Parks by WarwickNet and in parts of Reading by Hyperoptic on a commercial basis.

Digital Economy Minister Ed Vaizey said: "These contracts with Gigaclear and Call Flow Solutions are a fantastic result for the extra 13,450 Berkshire homes and businesses that will now get superfast broadband as a result of our rollout. Our nationwide rollout is now reaching 40,000 more premises every week and by 2017, 95 per cent of the UK will have access to superfast speeds, providing a tremendous boost to local economies across the UK."

For further information about the Superfast Berkshire project visit www.superfastberkshire.org.uk