



September 2018 update



Programme update

In his annual Portfolio Holder's report, Cllr. Nic Laurens, provides an update on the Connecting Shropshire broadband programme under the 'Deliver infrastructure to support growth' section, which starts on page six.

The report says that the Shropshire Council area now has around 90% coverage of superfast broadband, and that 98% of premises could have access to superfast broadband by the end of all current contracts (with Airband and BT/Openreach) in 2021.

The report restates the Council's aspiration to provide all premises with access to superfast broadband, although acknowledges that it will take longer than 2020 to realise the aspiration. The report can be read in full at: <http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s19847/Annual%20Report%20Portfolio%20Holder%20for%20Economic%20Growth.pdf>

Contract 3 update - Airband

Airband is continuing to build its broadband infrastructure network as part of the Connecting Shropshire programme. Airband's first transmitter went live in December 2017, and it now has 27 sites live across Shropshire, with a further 50 transmitters in planning/construction. This means that superfast broadband is already available to more than 6,000 premises and a further 4,000 premises are due to be covered in the next six months.

Airband's deployment in Shropshire has mostly been via its fixed wireless broadband network, using technology that enables it to deliver robust and superfast broadband connectivity to unserved parts areas of the Shropshire Council area.

This summer, Airband has become one of the first UK internet service providers to offer both wireless and fibre solutions. The south Shropshire village of Caynham has hosted this exciting and successful trial of Airband's bespoke fibre broadband service, RuralOptic.

Developed especially for rural areas where there are larger clusters of properties interested in the service, it delivers superfast fibre broadband to individual premises. Residents benefit from speeds of up to 100mbps. To find out more and to nominate your village go to: <http://ruraloptic.co.uk>.

Airband focuses on creating well-connected communities and is offering free Wi-Fi to village halls or community hubs within sight of their network. This is part of Airband's support for the Great British Village Hall - a mission to recognise the importance and value that village halls, churches and community shops represent for isolated rural areas.

Caynham Village Hall is one of the village halls that have already been connected and Airband are in the process of sending out a newsletter to generate awareness and interest in this scheme from other village halls.

Get in touch with Airband on 01905 676121 or email info@airband.co.uk.



Cllr. Elliott Lynch (left) visited Caynham to find out about the RuralOptic project from Redmond Peel, Managing Director of Airband

Contract 2 update - Openreach

Openreach are continuing to deliver access to superfast broadband for premises in the Shropshire Council area. Contract 2 is now expected to complete in summer 2019.



Among the latest communities to benefit are: Eaton-upon-Tern, Harley, Kemberton, Leamoor Common, Lyneal, Overton, Stanton-upon-Hine-Heath, The Hobbins, & Walford Heath.

Cabinet 10 in the Great Bolas exchange area serves Eaton-upon-Tern



Cabinet 4 in the Cressage exchange area serves premises in Harley

To find out if you're in Openreach's current or planned coverage area, please enter your landline or postcode on their website: <https://www.homeandbusiness.openreach.co.uk/fibre-broadband/when-can-i-get-fibre>.

90% superfast broadband coverage in the Shropshire Council area

ThinkBroadband has recently updated its superfast broadband statistics for the Shropshire Council area, which now take into account superfast 'fixed wireless' broadband provided by Airband and SWS Broadband. The coverage of superfast broadband in the Shropshire Council area is now standing at 90%. Source: thinkbroadband.com. To read the full article, go to: <https://www.thinkbroadband.com/news/8174-what-is-happening-with-broadband-in-shropshire?>

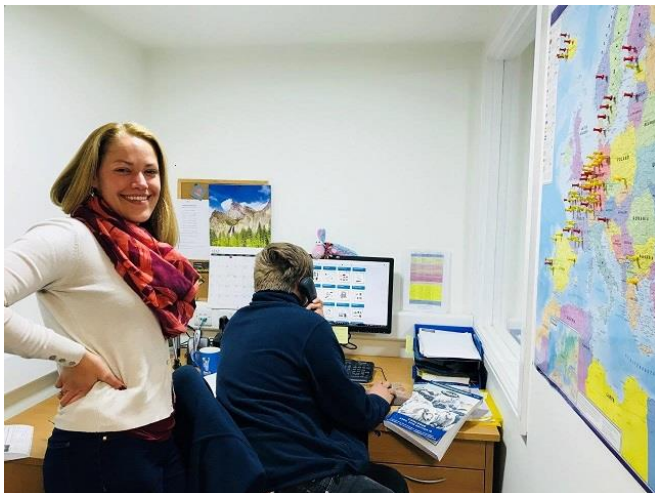
Broadband availability on new housing developments

We regularly receive enquiries from owners of properties on new housing developments asking when we'll be providing their new home with access to superfast broadband. The simple answer, generally speaking, is that we won't. This is because we don't have State Aid approval to invest public funding in improving access to broadband in new postcode areas.

In 2016, before Connecting Shropshire went out to tender for Contract 3, we carried out an Open Market Review. Under this process, broadband infrastructure suppliers were sent lists of premises on the Ordnance Survey AddressBase. The data only included homes that had been built and registered at that time.

It is not unreasonable to expect the developers to include superfast broadband in their on-site infrastructure, and many do. However, in some cases, people buy homes and expect that broadband will be provided, only to be disappointed once they move in. Buyers of any property, new or old, are strongly recommended to check the availability of superfast broadband, if it is important to them, before they buy.

Broadband grants available to eligible businesses - DEADLINE MARCH 2019



Gwaza Ltd. received a £25K grant to improve its broadband connection speed to 300mbps

The Marches and Gloucestershire Business Broadband Grant Scheme provides up to £25,000 for local eligible businesses to fund the installation of superfast broadband connections. The funding is designed to support qualifying businesses that cannot access superfast broadband at the moment and are not within any clearly defined roll out plans to receive superfast broadband.

The grant will fund the associated capital costs of delivery and installation of the solution to your premises. Applicants are responsible for paying the monthly cost through the contract term.

Gwaza Ltd became the first business in the Council area to benefit from a £25,000 grant from the Marches & Gloucestershire Broadband Grant scheme (funded by the European Regional Development Fund). To find out more, go to: <http://www.mgbroadbandgrants.com/>

Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme

Gigabit vouchers can be used by small and medium-sized businesses and the local communities surrounding them, to contribute to the installation cost of a gigabit capable broadband connection. This Scheme provides a lower level of grant funding than the Marches and Gloucestershire Business Broadband Grant Scheme (above). However, the Scheme is funded by UK government and is open to all registered businesses and not just those which are ERDF-eligible.

Businesses can claim up to £3,000 against the cost of connection either individually or as part of a group project. Residents can benefit from the scheme as part of a group project, which also includes businesses, and can claim for a voucher of up to a value of £500.

Vouchers can be aggregated so that if a community wanted to upgrade its connectivity then, as long as there are businesses involved, the vouchers can be pooled together to form one project covering the area.

For full details about whether you are eligible for the Voucher Scheme and to find out which full fibre broadband supplier operate in your area, go to: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk>

Please note that Connecting Shropshire has no involvement in the administration of this scheme, and we are unable to respond to queries about it.

Roundup of news items issued in 2018

July - <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/2018/07/farming-with-superfast-broadband-in-bridgnorth/>

June - <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/2018/06/sws-continues-to-expand-its-broadband-network-across-shropshire/>

May - <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/2018/05/business-broadband-grant/>

April - <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/2018/04/government-introduce-a-gigabit-broadband-voucher-scheme/>

March - <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/2018/03/connecting-shropshire-60-second-briefing/>


February - <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/2018/02/airband-first-customer-connected/>

January - <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/20180102-Monthly-update-January-2018.pdf>

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