

Introduction from Cllr. Lee Chapman

Cllr. Lee Chapman was recently appointed as Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for Organisational Transformation and Digital Infrastructure. This is a new Portfolio, which brings together the Council's internal organisational transformation with its digital infrastructure aspirations for Shropshire.

Cllr Chapman said "Shropshire Council has come a long way in improving access to broadband since the start of the programme. In 2012, prior to our first procurement, only 27% of premises in the Shropshire Council area had access to superfast broadband. As of June 2019, 93% of premises have access to a superfast broadband connection (30+mbps). We anticipate that around 97% of premises will be able to access superfast broadband by the end of the programme as long as commercial broadband infrastructure providers meet their commitments. We will continue to work with the market and the UK government to understand how we can ensure all premises have access to what is now a fundamental service that all communities rely upon".

Contract 2 update - Openreach

Openreach are continuing to deliver access to superfast broadband for premises in the Shropshire Council area. Contract 2 is expected to complete by the beginning of this autumn.

Among the latest places to benefit are:
Ash Magna, Ash Parva, Berwick Wharf, Bronygarth, Broome, Button Oak, Chapel Lawn, Chipnall, Clee St. Margaret, Clunton, Colemere, Crumpsbrook, Draycott, Edgeley, Glynmorlas, Great Ness, Grimpo, Grindley Brook, Heathton, High Hatton, Hopton, Ladywell, Llanymynech, Lyneal, Maesbrook, Middleton Scriven, Nant Lane, Rowton, Selattyn, Shrawardine, Stoke Heath, Wern, and Wistanstow.

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.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/>



Contract 3 update – Airband Community Internet Ltd.

Airband is continuing to build its wireless broadband infrastructure network as part of the Connecting Shropshire programme. Airband now has 78 transmitters providing over 9,500 Shropshire Council premises with access to a superfast broadband connection.

To check availability, go to <https://www.airband.co.uk/coverage/> or call Airband on 01905 676121.

Ofcom's Broadband Safety Net to start in March 2020

Ofcom has recently confirmed that everyone in the UK will have the legal right to request a decent and affordable broadband connection from March 2020, see: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2019/countdown-new-broadband-safety-net>

Ofcom is implementing the UK government's 'universal broadband service', a safety net that will give eligible homes and businesses a legal right to request a decent connection. As of today, about 4.7%** of premises in the Shropshire Council area would benefit from the new scheme, although this number is decreasing as

broadband networks are upgraded. Ofcom have decided that BT will be responsible for connecting properties in the whole of the UK (except the Hull area, where KCOM will be the designated provider).

** Source: thinkbroadband.com. See: <https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/shropshire,E06000051>

How will the Broadband Safety Net scheme work?

When someone makes a request, BT will have 30 days to confirm whether the customer is eligible. This will involve establishing whether the property already has access to decent broadband (at an affordable price) or if it is due to be connected by a publicly-funded scheme within 12 months.

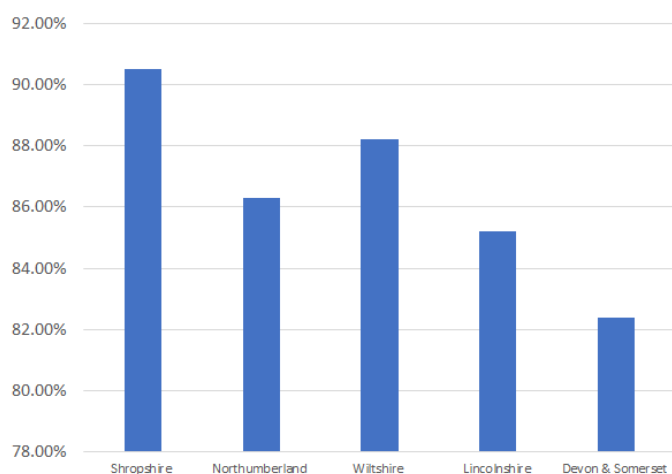
Once confirmed, BT will have to deliver the connection as quickly as possible. Under the legislation for the new service, the cost of providing connections to eligible homes will be paid for up to £3,400. If the required work costs more than that, customers can either pay the additional costs or seek an alternative solution outside the universal service, such as satellite broadband.

93% of premises now have access to superfast broadband in the Shropshire Council area

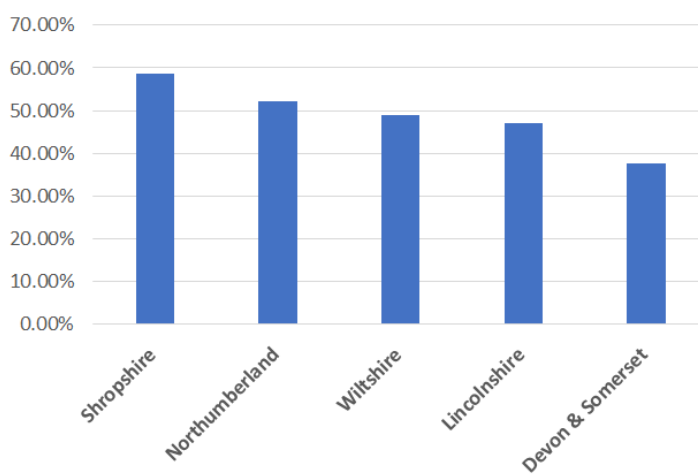
Shropshire Council is one of the most sparsely populated local authorities in England. Furthermore, the Council's homes and businesses are distributed throughout the whole landscape unlike other counties where there are concentrations of premises in and around towns & villages. These characteristics make broadband infrastructure technically more challenging to deploy in Shropshire and commercially unattractive to infrastructure providers to invest in.

The following data provided by ThinkBroadband shows how well Shropshire Council compares with its immediate rural peers on superfast broadband coverage:

Superfast coverage in rural areas (>30mbps)



% of premises that are rural:



GB rural superfast coverage figure = 87%

GB wide figure is 21.3% of premises are rural

ThinkBroadband includes superfast broadband statistics 'fixed' and 'fixed wireless' broadband providers which includes [Airband](#) and [SWS Broadband](#). The coverage of superfast broadband in the Shropshire Council area is now 93%. Think Broadband data is impartial, independent from Ofcom and is updated weekly.

To see more, please go to: <https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/shropshire,E06000051>

Source: thinkbroadband.com

5G update

5G is the fifth generation mobile telecoms technology, which promises exponentially faster download speeds and data-sharing capabilities.



The biggest difference between 5G and its predecessor generations is the opportunity to develop the 'Internet of Things' (IOT) on a significant scale. This remains the real economic and social 'game changer' that can potentially revolutionise data-driven industries and infrastructure management. This is because it'll be possible to have many more devices working, reliably, securely and uninterrupted in the same geographic area.

The 5G evolution will present multiple new business models and connectivity opportunities that can be exploited. It is this technology emergence that Shropshire Council is eager to explore, evaluate and exploit (where there is a business case).

Working with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), UK5G, and 5G pilot projects (which include the West Midlands Combined Authority), Shropshire Council will undertake a review of 5G technology to assess the potential opportunities for Shropshire communities and businesses, from a social & economic perspective.

A number of people have recently contacted Shropshire Council expressing concerns about the potential health impacts of 5G.

Cllr. Lee Chapman, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for Organisational Transformation and Digital Infrastructure, said "The West Midlands Combined Authority, of which Shropshire Council is a non-constituent member, is working with UK5G, DCMS, and Public Health England in assessing any potential health concerns. They publish a regularly-updated review* of current information on the effects of wireless communications on health and the environment and we will continue to monitor this review to ensure that we are aware of the latest information and advice."

In addition, as part of their 5G 'Urban Connected Communities' Pilot in Birmingham, the West Midlands Combined Authority has invited Shropshire Council to join a new working group that will share thinking and communications in relation to all things 5G, including the emerging health concerns."

To the Council's knowledge there are no current 5G Mobile Network Operator (MNO) masts or antennas in operational use in the Shropshire Council area.

*The review was last updated in March 2019, see: <https://uk5g.org/discover/research/5g-health-and-environmental-effects/>

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