



Broadband Project Update – January 2013

Current Status

In October last year the EU announced that State Aid had been approved for the BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK) framework contracts which included Shropshire. State Aid is where assistance is given from a public body, or publicly-funded body, and made available to the commercial market, which has the potential to distort competition and affect trade. As part of the State Aid conditions we conducted a public consultation exercise with network providers in Shropshire to establish their existing and future commercial deployment plans. The purpose was to ensure that we do not spend public funds where there is already an intended commercial presence which would distort the market.

The removal of the State Aid issue enabled a number of earlier projects to contract prior to Christmas. These included Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, Suffolk and Norfolk. Nationally there are 42 projects which are stacked in a 'call off' programme of projects. Shropshire is scheduled as project No 9 and remains positively placed in the early part of the programme deployment.

Connecting Shropshire issued an 'invitation to tender' (ITT) to suppliers who were on the BDUK framework, on 26th November 2012. The ITT set out the key project aims defined in our published Local Broadband plan:

- Enable 100% of Shropshire's population to access standard broadband at a minimum of 2mbps by the end of 2015.
- Provide as much superfast broadband delivered via fibre in Shropshire for the money available by the end of 2015. The government target for 2015 nationally is 90% of all premises.
- Support Shropshire businesses and residents in using and embracing broadband as part of everyday life.
- Create an open infrastructure to encourage competition in the market of broadband services.
- Stimulate demand by delivering a programme to demonstrate the economic and social benefits that faster broadband brings.

The total number of properties defined within the geographical scope, defined as the 'intervention area' is as follows:

- 71689 - Next Generation Access (24mbps>). The number of properties where there is currently no provider, or intended commercial provider supplying above 24mbps.
- 3993 - Standard Broadband (2 mbps>). The number of properties where there is currently no provider, or intended commercial provider supplying above 2mbps.

For context there are approximately 141,000 properties registered in Shropshire.

 connecting Shropshire

- There are no priority areas defined in Connecting Shropshire's ITT. The subsequent deployment and roll out of the network will be based upon an optimal roll out, planned by the supplier based on their commercial views. This is likely to reach the highest number of people for the subsidy that is being proposed, as it will be based on the most efficient roll out.
- The details of demand registrations completed (8000) has been made available to the Suppliers. This information will be used to inform their commercial decisions.

Next Stages

- Tenders are due to be returned by the Suppliers on 15th February 2013.
- Tenders will be evaluated and scored and moderated before a report is submitted to Cabinet in March 2013.
- Our aim is to announce a preferred partner before the end of March. Shropshire Council will not be the owners of the infrastructure that is built. We are only an 'investment partner' in the project.
- Starting in Spring 2013 the partner will be responsible for survey and planning in the project area.
- Physical deployment is anticipated to commence from the Autumn 2013.
- Connecting Shropshire has completed a Rural Community Broadband Fund application to DEFRA on behalf of a number of communities who may fall into the final 10% not receiving NGA superfast services (24mbps>). The initial outline business case has been approved with conditions. We are now working with BDUK and DEFRA to address full application.

Keep updated

- We will continue to keep our website updated over the forthcoming months. This will include information about the project, including timescales, together with evidence and demonstration of the benefits of using broadband for both Residents and Businesses. Please visit www.connectingshropshire.co.uk

If you require further information please contact Chris Taylor on 01743 252205 or chris.taylor@shropshire.gov.uk

NOTE:

BDUK - Broadband Delivery UK is a delivery vehicle for the Government's policies on broadband. BDUK is part of the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). To date BDUK have allocated 530 million to stimulate commercial investment to roll out high speed broadband in rural communities

DEFRA - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The £20m Fund is delivered as part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). The RCBF is jointly funded by Defra and Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and provides grants to communities to establish superfast broadband in hard-to-reach areas (final 10%).