BETTER BROADBAND FOR OXFORDSHIRE
Connecting homes and businesses

Bringing high-speed fibre broadband to over 96% of homes and businesses in Oxfordshire by the end of 2018

Better Broadband update - December 2017

This has been a quarter of contrasts. The programme has achieved our target of 95% superfast broadband coverage in Oxfordshire, just ahead of the December 2017 Government objective.

Take up of superfast services enabled by the programme now exceeds 50%, with over 100,000 people now accessing fast digital services who would not otherwise have been able to. Meanwhile delivery of actual new coverage during the quarter has remained slow. The Openreach team have completed a lot of preparation work, lining up some 50 structures to be delivered by 31st December. This will be a challenge, and planning around roadworks during the festive season needs to be carefully managed.

We expect Openreach to be just on track with the original overall volume target, but we are working to raise this target to ensure all the communities in scope are delivered, albeit with around 2,000 premises needing to be part of the 2018 phase. The Better Broadband map will be updated shortly to reflect this and the team always welcome any enquiries regarding revised timetables.

The biggest impediment to moving these remaining structures forward with delivery is achieving the necessary wayleaves, where cabinets or access to power is required on private land.

I am delighted by the signing of our first co-funded community at Goosey Wick and was pleased to meet the residents on site. The team continues to actively contact parish councils and communities where this approach is likely to be most viable. As a reminder, this scheme applies when the cost of delivering fibre infrastructure is simply too high for the public purse to fund entirely.

Finally, we congratulate West Oxfordshire District Council in contracting Gigaclear for the remaining coverage in West Oxfordshire. This has been very challenging and taken some time to conclude, but will all ultimately help the county to be one of the best connected in the UK.

BBfO latest statistics - up to 30th Sept. 17

Funding initiatives

Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN)

Following the announcement of a £200m Challenge Fund being set up for Local Full Fibre Networks in the spring 2017 budget, Oxfordshire County Council has been holding initial discussions with DCMS, other Local Authorities, and Suppliers to scope the potential this funding might present in Oxfordshire and the region. We have submitted an Expression of Interest to DCMS describing the benefits this might bring in both a Fibre voucher scheme (demand led), as well as aggregation of public sector sites as a catalyst for additional investment in fibre infrastructure. Strategies are at an early stage, but there is potentially good synergy as we look to enhance the digital landscape in the region. We are attending a workshop in London on 15th December and will provide an update in the next newsletter.

DEFRA Funding

Details have now been released on the application process for DEFRA funding

aimed at installing fibre broadband infrastructure targeting rural businesses. OCC is preparing an application and is underway with also readying a procurement in anticipation of being awarded funding. This includes a refreshed Open Market Review (OMR) which we have launched and is live on the Better Broadband website. We remain keen to hear from any businesses willing to write a short description of how their business could grow if they were able to access fast broadband.

Co-Funded Community Fibre Partnerships

The first Oxfordshire community to sign up for the OCC Better Broadband Co-Funding scheme is at Goosey Wick, near Charney Bassett. OCC has contracted Openreach to deliver a Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) solution to eleven premises, effectively providing a 1000-fold increase for most of these in their potential broadband speeds.

The scheme is set up to allow the Better Broadband scheme to assist communities by joining together financial contributions from the local residents and businesses, Openreach, and the county council. Without this approach the solution would be unaffordable for the public purse to entirely fund. Notably, this solution also comprises an element of 'self-dig', where a field is being productively used with the landowner installing ducting which Openreach will adopt and blow fibre though. This avoids costly installation of extensive new ducting which would otherwise have needed to run several kilometres around the periphery.

OCC is in discussion about the scheme with other interested communities and underway with a scheme for Godington in Cherwell likely to proceed. We welcome any further interest. To read the full article please visit our website, 'Latest news'

and follow this link for further information regarding the 'Co-Funded Fibre Broadband Partnership.'

Coming to a cabinet near you!

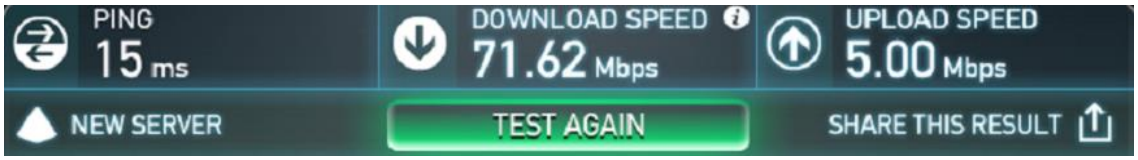
Since our last newsletter, the cabinets covering the following areas are now accepting orders:

- Banbury Business Park
- B481 area, Cookley Green
- Church Lane area, Pyrton
- Curle Avenue area, Harwell
- Fencott Road area, Murcott
- Fewcott Green area, Fewcott
- Frome Road area, Chilton
- Hinksey Hill area, Oxford
- Little Wittenham village
- Lodge Hill area, Abingdon
- Lower Heyford Road area, Caulcott
- Lower Tadmarton
- Manor Farm Lane, Balscote
- Milton Hill, Steventon
- Quarry Road area, Bayworth
- Station Road area, Baulking
- The Causeway area, Steventon
- Woolstone Road area, Woolstone
- Worminghall Road area, Waterperry
- Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Wallingford

Cabinets covering the following areas will soon begin accepting orders:

- Goring Heath Village
- Howland Road business park, Thame
- Rotherfield Peppard Village
- Shillingford Hill area, Wallingford
- Springhill area, Longworth
- Weston Business Park, Weston-on-the-Green

Broadband providers must ditch 'misleading' speeds claims in adverts



Broadband firms will no longer be able to advertise their fast broadband services based on the speeds just a few customers get, from May next year. Currently ISPs are allowed to use headline speeds that only 10% of customers will actually receive. In future, adverts must be based on what is available to at least half of customers at peak times. It follows research that suggested broadband advertising can be misleading for consumers. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) looked into consumers' understanding of broadband speed claims and found that many were confused by headline speeds that they would never actually get in their own homes.

The concerns were passed on to the Committees of Advertising Practice (Cap) which consulted with ISPs, consumer groups and Ofcom to find a better way to advertise fast net services. Most argued that the fairest and clearest way would be to use the average speeds achieved at peak time by 50% of customers. As well as insisting ISPs use ‘average’ instead of ‘up to’ speeds, Cap also urged ISPs to promote speed-checking facilities in their adverts so that users could test out the speeds they were likely to get from any given service.

Consumer victory

Director of the Committees of Advertising Practice, Shahriar Coupal, said: "There are a lot of factors that affect the broadband speed a customer is going to get in their own home; from technology to geography, to how a household uses broadband. Our new standards will give consumers a better understanding of the broadband speeds offered by different providers when deciding to switch providers."

The UK's minister for digital Matt Hancock welcomed the change, describing it as: “a victory for consumers. I'm delighted to see that CAP is finally changing the way broadband speeds are advertised. Headline 'up to' speeds that only need to be available to 10% of consumers are incredibly misleading - customers need clear,

concise and accurate information in order to make an informed choice."

The ASA also considered whether the use of ‘fibre’ in broadband advertising was misleading for ISPs that only use fibre to the road-side phone cabinet, relying on a copper connection for the so-called last mile to a consumer's home. It found that most people saw the use of fibre as a ‘shorthand buzzword’ to describe fast broadband and concluded that it was not misleading for ISPs to use the term.

Follow this link to read more

Digital helpers needed!

library? We’re looking for patient and friendly volunteers to teach digital skills to beginners. You don’t need to be an expert, just competent in using computers and good at communicating with learners of all ages.

Follow this link to find out more

Technical factoids

‘Flying Fibre:'

In some cases it is less expensive to install fibre overhead on poles rather than laying ducting, especially where the road infrastructure comprises very narrow lanes with difficulty in achieving road closures. Openreach have relatively recently started

using a new light-weight fibre suitable for overhead delivery via specialist teams sub-contracted for this element of solution delivery

Fibre to the Remote Node (FTTRN): FTTRN is a technology proposed for delivery where there is a very low volume of premises to be connected – i.e. less than twenty. It is notionally less expensive than standing an entire cabinet, and uses street furniture (poles) on which to erect a small DSLAM which connects to the fibre network. This technology is currently paused due to challenges in finding a way to cost-effectively connect the power network. In some case this has led to a redesign of proposed solutions in our existing plans and has caused delivery dates to slip.

Your Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)

What does 'live-to-live migration' mean?
When premises are connected to fibre-enabled cabinets but are too far to receive superfast speeds, the solution is to build a new combined DSLAM and PCP closer to these premises. This is a single box combining the copper telephone lines and the digital fibre connection points. This presents two challenges. Firstly, all Service Providers with customers on the existing (distant) cabinet, need to be advised of the new cabinet being built, such that they can install the necessary update to their equipment in the serving telephone exchange such that it can 'recognise' the new structure. Then during the actual switchover, resident's telephone lines need to be physically moved off the ports on the distant cabinet, and onto the correct ports of the new closer cabinet. Then, all routing records need to be configured to recognise this new topology. As the residents of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell will attest, this can be tricky and Openreach are working on resolving how this end-to-end process can be achieved more smoothly.

What is meant by a 'wayleave' and why are these required?
A wayleave is required when the installation of a fibre broadband structure, or access to power, is needed on or across privately owned land. As we are now delivering into very rural areas, this becomes more problematic with highways (publicly owned land) being less suitable or not available. We currently have some twenty-five installations held up due to not being able to achieve the necessary wayleave. Whenever we know the exact location of the required wayleave, we do seek to help with gaining permission to build, but for these remaining problem wayleaves we are unable to

establish who the landowner is for a number of different reasons.

Read more FAQs

Follow progress - BBfO coverage maps

Residents and businesses opting for an upgrade will be able to access broadband download speeds of up to 80 megabits per second (Mbps) and uploads of up to 20Mbps.* The network is being rolled out by Openreach, therefore residents and businesses will have a range of Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

** These are the top wholesale speeds available from Openreach to all service providers; speeds offered by service providers may vary.*

Find out more

Visit Better Broadband for Oxfordshire