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## Better Broadband update - June 2017



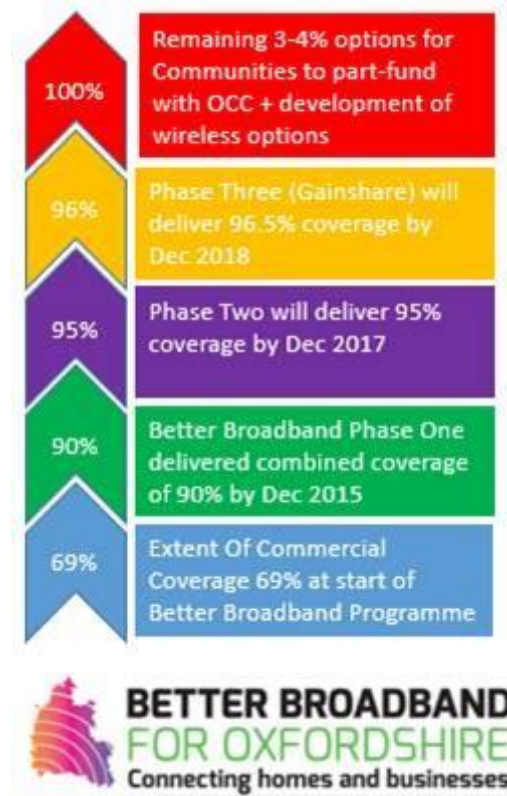
I am delighted to be taking on cabinet member responsibility for broadband among my new portfolio. Decent broadband, or indeed the lack of it, has been a topical and important subject for many residents in my travels around South Oxfordshire. For those still remaining in the slow lane, struggling to work from business or home, enduring the 'download in progress' circle spinning without effect as you wait for iPlayer to deliver content, or listening to your children complain as only children do about living in the slow lane or even the hard shoulder of the superfast highway, I understand the frustration. We are however continuing to deliver fibre broadband to thousands more rural premises, and have firm sight of getting to some 96% of premises in Oxfordshire by December next year.

Overall, the programme is in good shape across a range of measurements, which provides me with confidence that the circa 8,000 planned premises remaining to be delivered under the programme, will be completed within the next eighteen months. The map on the Better Broadband website shows the postcodes where this coverage is planned. The remaining premises without a firm plan stay in our sights and we continue to explore options for these.

[Find out more - Final 4%](#)

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## Superfast coverage in Oxfordshire



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## Additional coverage now contracted

On 18th May, we signed a significant Change Control with BT for adding further coverage to that already contracted. This will bring an additional 2,396 premises access to superfast broadband, without any additional public funding being applied, as we start reaping the benefits of good contract cost controls and high adoption of fibre broadband services by Oxfordshire residents and businesses. This second aspect is important. Take-up in Oxfordshire is rising steadily, and at above 45% is now among the very highest in the UK. As the contract matures this will mean a rebate from BT almost entirely offsetting the investment made by the county council and as such demonstrates how public/private partnerships should operate whilst providing material benefit to citizens.

Meanwhile, in terms of delivery, after a relatively slow first quarter of 2017, momentum is now building as forecast in our Spring newsletter. The team are targeting some 1,200 premises being connected during June, requiring fifteen new

broadband cabinets, all connected via long fibre runs back to ten telephone exchanges. A particular challenge at this stage of the programme is securing wayleaves for power access in completely new locations as described in the Technical Update box below.

Further information on areas expected to be enabled by the end of June can be found towards the end of this newsletter.

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## Technical Update

Much of the remaining infrastructure upgrade required to connect with the new fibre infrastructure being installed, depends on completely new 'all-in-one cabinets.'

These combine the old telephone (PCP) and the new fibre (DSLAM) structures and serve as new aggregation cabinets on the copper access network. These new cabinets are required when the old cabinet is simply too far from clusters of properties to be able to provide superfast broadband.

This work requires extensive re-engineering of the access network to re-arrange existing telephone wires from the old cabinets to the new more 'local' ones. But the work does take longer!

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## West Oxfordshire District Council - Launch ITT

West Oxfordshire have launched the Invitation to Tender (ITT) to roll-out superfast broadband. The ITT has been published on OJEU and on the Council's, Shared Procurement Portal. The closing date for Expressions of Interest is 20th June 2017 and the deadline for submission of tenders is 15th August 2017. It is anticipated that contracts will be signed at the end of October.

[Find out more](#)

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## Working with other broadband suppliers to achieve maximum coverage

*“As part of a three-year struggle to have the local cabinet upgraded to fibre optic quality, I engaged with my local MP and Better Broadband for Oxfordshire. All were supportive but the cabinet was never upgraded and still offers unbelievably low speeds, despite being just a short walk from Oxford city centre. However, during this period I was eventually put in touch with Deirdre from BBO and she made all the difference.*

The result?

*The block of flats for older people where I live, is now connected to Virgin Media superfast fibre broadband and it’s fantastic! Virgin installed the system to our building without charge and Deirdre monitored and moved everything along to this exciting conclusion. I’m a trustee of a charity looking after sponsorships for orphaned and vulnerable children and receive and send lots of photos. It used to take hours to get them in and out of my computer but now – in and out like rockets! Thanks Deirdre, BBfO and Virgin too for making all this possible.”*

Sandy Bharatt

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## BBfO Latest statistics - up to 31st March 17



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## Co-Funded Community Fibre Partnerships

The Better Broadband team now have plans to connect over 96% of Oxfordshire premises ([excluding West Oxon](#)). Therefore, we can now estimate postcode areas where coverage is not scheduled under the programme. The reason for these premises not being in the plan is simply the very high cost per premise in these final few percent of premises, which is simply not possible for the public purse to entirely fund.

Oxfordshire County Council has ring-fenced funding, from savings accrued to date, to co-fund the installation of Openreach fibre infrastructure, when financial support from the relevant community is identified as being available. In these cases, the county council will fund the first £1700 per premise on a first come, first served basis.

Full details are available on the website along with an expression of interest form.

[Find out more](#)

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## Wireless broadband options

The Better Broadband team has continued to engage with fixed wireless suppliers operating in Oxfordshire, and we plan to hold a forum in mid-July to update suppliers of where we anticipate gaps in coverage, as well as the latest investment plans suppliers have for extending wireless coverage. This type of coverage can provide a viable alternative option and customers can generally benefit from a relatively personalised service provision. Suppliers we are aware of with services available in Oxfordshire include:

<http://www.vnworks.net>

<http://countrysidebroadband.co.uk>

<https://www.sugarnet.co.uk>

<http://wurzelsweb.com>

<http://www.voneus.com>

<http://notspotbroadband.com>

<https://www.yonet-telecom.com>

Remember, if you currently receive less than 2Mb/s, there may be options to have installation costs subsidised by the Better Basic Broadband scheme.

[Find out more](#)

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## Fibre laying in Howe Road, Watlington - April 17



## Coming to a cabinet near you!

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

- Chilton Field Way area, Chilton
- Gramps Hill area, Letcombe Bassett
- London Road area, Wheatley
- Middleton Stoney Park area, Middleton Stoney
- South Parks Road area, Oxford
- The Green area, North Aston
- B4015 area, Nuneham Courtenay

A further fifteen cabinets will begin taking orders by the end of June:

- Howe Road area, Watlington

- Hinksey Hill area, Oxford
- Trinity Way area, Adderbury
- Fewcott Green area, Fewcott
- Lodge Hill area, Abingdon
- Quarry Road area, Bayworth
- The Causeway area, Steventon
- Little Wittenham Road area, Little Wittenham
- High Street area, Long Wittenham
- Northampton Road area, Weston-on-the-Green
- Milton Hill area, Steventon
- Curle Avenue area, Harwell
- Frome Road area, Chilton
- Station Road area, Baulking
- Cuddesdon Road area, Horspath

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## 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 – BT's local network business – therefore, residents and businesses have a wide choice of an Internet Service Provider.

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

[Find out more](#)

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## Your Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)

### **Why has a new fibre cabinet been stood, but nothing appears to be happening?**

There are several engineering tasks that need to be completed before a new fibre cabinet can go live, therefore the 'standing' is one of the first tasks required in the build cycle, which on average, can take around nine months. So, it's not unusual to see a new cabinet stood for some time before it actually goes live.

When the cabinet has been stood, the process will begin to extend the network from the exchange to the fibre cabinet, which may require several kilometres of cable and road closures for traffic management. There is also the possibility of hitting delays should engineers encounter further issues with survey results of underground ducts or require wayleaves on private land or any other engineering challenges that may occur. The new cabinet would also require a power supply and other electronic equipment to be installed, followed by commissioning and light tests to ensure everything is working correctly - as you can imagine, this is a careful process and can take time.

The Internet Service Providers (ISPs) would then be informed of the new upgraded cabinet and would offer upgraded services to their customers. You can tell if the cabinet has gone live and ready to take customer orders by the large sticker declaring that 'Fibre broadband is here,' to help raise awareness in the community.

Please note that the upgrade would not happen automatically, therefore as a customer, you would need to contact your ISP to make the upgrade.

[Read more FAQs](#)

[Visit Better Broadband for Oxfordshire](#)