

Get faster broadband

# Superfast Leicestershire

9<sup>th</sup> October, 2017

Leicestershire County Council

Superfast Leicestershire Stakeholder Forum

## Questions and Answers

**1. What is Government's policy on broadband?**

To provide funding and leverage commercial investment to support the deployment/rollout of superfast broadband to areas of market failure i.e. areas that have not benefited from commercially funded rollouts of fibre broadband. Government's definition of superfast broadband is 24Mbps or greater, while the EU and Ofcom class superfast as 30Mbps or more.

**2. What is Leicestershire County Council's policy on broadband?**

Leicestershire County Council is committed to ensuring all properties across the county have access to the broadband speeds they need. Phase 1 of the Superfast Leicestershire programme saw availability of superfast broadband (24Mbps+) increase from 81% in 2014 to 92% by March 2016. Phase 2 will see coverage grow to 96% by the end of December 2016, above the national average. The recently announced Phase 2 Extension will increase coverage further still, to 97% by September 2018.

A Phase 3 is currently in development. Further detail is available here: <http://www.superfastleicestershire.org.uk/5m-boost-to-superfast-network/>

**3. What is the process for a cabinet going live?**

The first stage of the process is to undertake detailed survey and network design in the area; selecting the most suitable technology solution to deliver the fastest speeds to the most properties. The new fibre broadband cabinet is then stood, often long before further engineering work is due to take place. A date is arranged for a power supply to be connected before the cabinet is linked or joined to the existing copper telephone network. If necessary, copper network rearrangement may be required. This is often a very complex and time consuming process which can lead to delay. In parallel, new fibre optic cabling is brought along underground ducts or across overhead telegraph poles from one of fourteen main fibre Exchange buildings across the county. This is connected to the new fibre cabinet before a process of technical testing is undertaken.

Once all work is done and signed off, we progress to what is known as commissioning. This process typically takes between two and four weeks to complete and involves Openreach notifying all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) that they will soon be able to offer customers a superfast broadband service. Once the cabinet reaches the 'Customer Ready for Service' stage, you can then place your order to upgrade.

We publicise details through our regular updates, which you can sign up to on our website. We will also publish details on the Council's Twitter and Facebook accounts. You can sign up for updates here:

<http://www.superfastleicestershire.org.uk/register-for-notifications/>

**4. Why do some new housing developments not have fibre installed? Is there no legal requirement?**

Whilst there is no legal requirement for a telecoms operator or property developer to provide superfast broadband to 'new sites', there are now schemes in place that tackle this issue. In 2016, Government announced a new agreement with BT and the Home Builders Federation (HBF) to deliver fibre broadband, to new developments over a certain size. Currently the scheme provides for Openreach to provide Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) to all new to sites of 30+ properties. As part of the scheme the HBF will promote and support uptake of this service amongst their members.

We have and will continue to work closely and to support district planning authorities to include broadband criteria within their Local Plans and to work closely with parish or community groups who are developing Neighbourhood Plans.

**5. Our village is due to be upgraded to fibre broadband, but not for some time. In the meantime is there nothing that can be done?**

The rollout is planned in logical phases with the key drivers being efficient delivery and keeping costs down. As such it is not possible to bring one area ahead of others as this would result in increased cost and may delay the overall rollout.

You can find out how to get the most out of your existing connection by following our top ten tips, available here: <http://www.superfastleicestershire.org.uk/how-to-supercharge-your-broadband/>

**6. What capacity will our box have?**

Each cabinet is installed with sufficient capacity to meet anticipated demand. Occasionally demand is much higher than expected and this can lead to delays for some people trying to upgrade.

Any costs of increasing capacity are met by Openreach who have a dedicated team responsible for capacity management. That team monitors take-up rates for all cabinets delivered by the Superfast Leicestershire programme. Before initial capacity is reached, Openreach take action to ensure that everyone who is able to connect can take up a fibre service.

It is important to note that lead times for increasing capacity will differ on a case by case basis.

There are rare occasions when demand is so high that capacity is reached before Openreach can take action and this can result in delays for some people trying to upgrade. This is very uncommon and when it does occur, the Council's Project Team will monitor progress and will ensure all issues are resolved as quickly as possible.

**7. What is basic broadband?**

Government and the County Council have a commitment to ensure that everyone has access to at least basic broadband which is recognised as being 2Mbps. There are around 2,000

properties in Leicestershire, in mostly remote rural areas who currently struggle to access even basic broadband speeds.

In these instances, the Better Broadband Scheme is available to help. It provides a £350 voucher to eligible applicants which will cover the full installation and set up costs for a wireless or satellite broadband service. Speeds available range from 10Mbps to 50Mbps dependant on the technology and package selected.

The Better Broadband Scheme is currently due to close at the end of 2017. If you know someone who may benefit, please share the link below, which includes further information and the online application form:

<http://www.superfastleicestershire.org.uk/register-for-notifications/the-final-4/better-broadband-subsidy-scheme/>

#### **8. Where can I find fibre deployment details for my area?**

Full coverage and rollout plan information is available via our online interactive map:

<http://www.superfastleicestershire.org.uk/when-and-where/>

#### **9. When will the next Superfast Leicestershire forum be scheduled?**

The next forum is likely to be held in approximately 5-6 months. Details will be sent to all Parish Councils and to anyone registered for our regular updates:

<http://www.superfastleicestershire.org.uk/register-for-notifications/>

## **UPDATES ON SPECIFIC AREAS**

**Please note: Should you require information for a specific address, please email [broadband@leics.gov.uk](mailto:broadband@leics.gov.uk) with your full address, including postcode, and landline telephone number (if available).**

#### **10. Update for Husbands Bosworth**

Two cabinets have been installed in the village (Bell Lane and The Green) as part of our Phase 1 rollout.

95% of the village can now access superfast broadband of 24Mbps or above. The average speed available is now an incredible 62Mbps!

Around 20 properties can access speed uplifts from upgrading to fibre that don't quite reach superfast levels. These properties and any with no speed uplift at all, will be eligible and within scope of our Phase 3 rollout. We don't yet know which areas are to benefit through Phase 3 but will publicise details as soon as they become available. This will likely be during Spring 2018, once contract(s) have been awarded to an infrastructure delivery partner.

#### **11. Update for Blaby Parish**

There is extensive superfast broadband coverage in the area delivered by a range of different commercial operators.

Two cabinets have been delivered through the Superfast Leicestershire rollout (Western Drive and the Industrial Park).

All homes and business should now have access.

#### **12. Update for West Langton**

A commercial network operator has previously informed us that they have

plans to bring superfast coverage to the village. We are unable to invest public funds to bring connectivity to areas where a commercial operator does or plans to provide a service. To do so would be a breach of State Aid rules and would be a waste of public funds.

Following investigation, it appears that the network operator in question no longer has plans to connect the village. We will address this with the operator as part of the process of developing our Phase 3 rollout and once confirmed we can bring the village into scope for Superfast Leicestershire intervention.

### **13. Update for Houghton on the Hill**

Upgrades in the area were delivered during late 2013 and early 2014 through commercial rollouts of superfast broadband. As such intervention from Superfast Leicestershire has not been required.

### **14. Update for Grimston Parish**

Two cabinets are being installed, one in Saxelbye and one in Grimston. The cabinet locations have been chosen based on engineering considerations. Complex network rearrangement of the existing copper network is required to deliver superfast speeds to each village. Work is on track to be complete before the end of 2017. Early indications are that all properties in Grimston and Saxelbye will be able to upgrade to speeds in excess of 24Mbps.

Through our recently announced Phase 2 Extension, Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) will be delivered along Saxelby Park Road towards Shoby during 2018.