



Bringing faster broadband to our rural areas

Project Update October 2015

**Please forward this email to your contacts –
we need to spread the word!**

Sign up to receive this e-newsletter direct to your inbox and for information about progress on your cabinet or exchange-only line: <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/contact-us/register-for-more-information>

227 cabinets live to date

Over 42,654 properties able to connect to the fibre network

Topics in this edition:

Poor broadband on many new housing developments

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Questions and Answers

Poor broadband on many new housing developments

We are increasingly being contacted by people who have bought homes on new (and sometimes not so new) housing developments and then find that there is no broadband connectivity. The situation is made worse by the fact that housebuilders have to build to an EU standard which requires that all new homes are fully internet ready. Therefore, the house is wired, lots of connection points, and a connectivity point situated in a prominent position, often right next to the front door. However, because there is no broadband available on the estate all of this technology is completely worthless.

This situation occurs because there is currently no legislation requiring developers to install broadband, and therefore the developers very often don't bother. BT makes ducting and other equipment available free of charge to developers, but still, many do not undertake to provide what is now becoming a basic daily requirement. We accept that in some areas there may be no fibre spine available to connect to, but as the CSW Broadband project rolls out we are reaching into the most rural areas and so the cost to developers of providing connectivity is vastly reduced. If fibre were provided from the outset on new developments and brought to a central aggregation point it would be a comparatively low cost to connect the development to the fibre spine when it is available.

We are regularly contacted by residents wanting to know what we can do for their development, and the answer is - very little! Unless it is designed in from the outset, developers will not allow access to utility companies to install fibre spines or cabinets until a development is complete and the

roads have been adopted – and this can take many years from the occupation of the first homes. We are aware of at least one case where a developer was prepared to allow access and to pay 50% of the costs, as long as the residents covered the balance of the cost of the installation themselves. The only problem was that there are only 70 completed properties on this development and they were asked to cover the cost of the whole estate, including over 200 homes that had yet to be built!

So, what can you do? In the first instance, approach the developer before buying to ask what broadband speeds/availability are – and get this in writing! If more people ask this question it should prompt the developers to consider being proactive in this matter.

If you already live in a new home and there is no broadband you could:

- Approach the developer to ask what their plans are
- If they have no plans to provide broadband and the development is still being built, consider starting a campaign with posters in windows stating “No Broadband Here”. It will act as a warning to others who may be thinking of buying new houses, and may prompt the developer to do something if they want to sell houses
- If you do decide to go for a community solution then BT have a very helpful section on their website about Community Fibre Partnerships: www.openreach.co.uk/communityfibre

In the meantime, we are working with all of our Local Planning Authorities to ensure that they have policies in place that will enable high quality fibre broadband to be provided to future developments.

Unlimited Faster Broadband

Did you know that BT has a product for properties that are able to connect to the fibre network but which, for reasons of distance or other factors, are unlikely to achieve superfast speeds? Unlimited Faster Broadband is an internet connection delivered over fibre optic from the exchange to your local cabinet (the green box on the street) and then a copper wire from the cabinet to your home. This is the same technology used for the BT Infinity service, except the estimated download speeds for Unlimited Faster Broadband are between 2Mb and 15Mb. This makes it ideal for customers where an ISP won't provide a superfast package because of speed issues.

Why (you might ask) would you want this option? Well, some properties are too far from the fibre cabinet to achieve the full 24Mbps that qualifies as superfast, and in the past have been told that they would have to remain on the slower copper connections. Unlimited Faster Broadband offers increased speeds and packages that may include unlimited weekend calls, cloud storage and other benefits.

We have had reports that some residents have experienced difficulties in ordering this service, but we have been assured that the BT sales teams should now be up to speed (pun intended!) with this service. So, if you do experience any problems please let us know and we'll pass the information on to BT.

For more information go to: http://bt.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/47740/~/_what-is-unlimited-faster-broadband%3F

Business Broadband Connection Vouchers suspended – what next?

As many people will be aware, the Business Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme was so successful that the £40m available nationally for the current financial year was used up in just 6 months. An announcement was made that the scheme would stop in a month's time, and as a result of a flurry of applications it was suspended 24 hours later. This has caused great disappointment for

those people whose application was being processed, or who had been able to submit an application yet.

So, what of the future? We have no knowledge of any plans to bring the scheme back, but we will be watching the Chancellor's Autumn Statement with interest. It is also possible that some providers may choose to set up their own schemes since this has proved so successful. As always, watch our social media postings for the latest information, and we'll also put a piece in a future newsletter if there is any news on this front.

Copy for your own website or newsletter

We regularly produce updates of around 350 words that can be used on your own website or in newsletters. There are a selection of articles available for download and you can select the most appropriate depending on where your particular area is in the rollout pipeline. Copy can be found at: <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/downloads-resources/copy-to-use-on-your-own-website-newsletters-or-flyers>

Questions and Answers

Here are some of the Q&As raised at our local briefing events. Our newly revamped website will have an updated set of Q&As.

My area is shown as purple on the rollout map, what does this mean?

A lot of these areas will be Exchange Only lines or other non-standard structures where we have no information as yet. These areas will be brought into the coloured phases as the surveys and planning progress.

Some of these areas may go straight from purple to green (i.e. live and providing services), so the best thing is to register for more information through our website. We will send you our e-newsletter, which comes out once a month and contains project updates, information about local meetings and events, broadband news, FAQs, competitions and more. By providing us with your landline number and address we can also send specific information as we learn more about what is happening in your area. You can register here: <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/contact-us/register-for-more-information/>

Please note that the map has been developed using data based on postcodes. This means that the colour coding on the map can only provide an estimated network coverage. Please use the DSL checker: (www.dslchecker.bt.com) to establish which cabinet your property is connected to. For the best results you will need to be able to enter a BT landline number for your property. If you do not have this then you can use your address, but it may be less accurate. Do not use the postcode checker as that covers too wide an area to be of any use. You can then check the specific cabinet on our Rolling 12-Month Plan which can be found at: (<http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/where-when/rolling-12-month-plan/>).

My cabinet is part of the rollout - can you tell me what stage of the upgrade the cabinet is at?

We estimate that each phase of cabinets will take approximately 6 months to upgrade and, unless the cabinet becomes delayed in its upgrade, we do not track the individual statuses of each one. If there are any problems with the upgrade of a cabinet, we list 'Reasons for Delay' on the rolling 12-month plan: <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/where-when/rolling-12-month-plan>

If you would like to be notified when your cabinet goes live, please register on our website here: <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/contact-us/register-for-more-information>

My cabinet is showing as delayed because civil engineering works are needed, what does this mean?

If your cabinet is listed on the Rolling 12-Month Plan as requiring Civil Engineering Works, there may be any number of reasons for this. The most common is when a blockage is found in the duct and the fibre cannot be blown through. If this is the case then digging will have to take place to repair the ducts – and the problem is that there may be more than one blockage, which would require more digging. As we move into the more rural areas we are likely to see more and more of these problems.

Unfortunately, we do not have timescales for cabinets delayed by civil engineering work due to the unpredictable nature of the problem. However, the engineering teams are working as quickly as they can to resolve these issues.

By registering for more information, we can email you to let you know when your cabinet goes live. You can register here: <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/contact-us/register-for-more-information>

More frequently asked broadband questions can be found on our website at: <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/faq>

Send this email on to all your contacts! We need to reach as many people as possible as quickly as possible. Please send this email to your contacts and encourage them to send it further. It's probably best to remove the contact details above our logo at the top of the email otherwise it could get to be a very long string before the email itself appears!

CSW Broadband now on social media – come and join the conversation

We are now on the major social media channels and are already creating a buzz. Join in for up-to-date information and an opportunity to influence how the project develops:

Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/CSWSuperfastBroadband>

Twitter - <https://twitter.com#!/cswbroadband>

LinkedIn - <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/CSW-Superfast-Broadband-4403473>

Don't forget our new email addresses!

Don't forget that we now have new email addresses and that using these will help us to better respond to your enquiries:

Newsletter BroadbandNews@cswbroadband.org.uk

All enquiries Broadband@cswbroadband.org.uk