



Bringing faster broadband to our rural areas

Project Update March 2016

**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>

249 cabinets live to date

Over 43,000 properties able to connect to the fibre network

Topics in this edition:

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Copy for your own website or newsletter

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The different contracts explained

We recognise that it is confusing for people to hear about Contract 1 or Contract 2, Part 1 etc. – so here's where we are up to:

Contract 1

This was signed in May 2013, and the first phase of the rollout was announced in February. The first cabinet went live in April 2014. Contract 1 is now drawing to a close, and we are getting to the more difficult to reach places, meaning that individual upgrades may take longer to complete. The common reasons for delays are the need for road closures, collapsed ducts, or problems with the local infrastructure. If you are affected by these issues then please check our rolling 12-month plan which is updated as we get more information. <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/about-the-project/rolling-12-month-plan>

Some of the areas that are being completed towards the end of Contract 1 have Exchange Only (EO) lines other structures. EO lines do not have a cabinet between the exchange and their property and so are unable to benefit from the technology that is being used for the main areas.

This makes the upgrades of these areas more complicated (and more expensive) as there are greater engineering challenges. For instance, because EO lines don't have the copper lines routed through a copper cabinet (PCP) there is no aggregation point to which we can connect the fibre cabinet (DSLAM). Therefore we have to install two cabinets and this creates additional challenges in terms of location in addition to the ones that we face for all DSLAMs with regard to the availability of power, avoiding existing services, road safety issues etc. Contract 2, Part 1, includes a considerably higher percentage of exchange only lines, and a lot of the more challenging locations that could not be brought into Contract 1.

It should be noted that because of the nature of the installation, it is not until the exchange only lines have actually been connected up to the new cabinets that we will know which properties will be able to benefit from the superfast broadband service. This creates challenges for us in terms of letting people know that the service is available! The best thing is to register your details with us so that we can notify you when superfast is available. A lot of people have registered to receive this newsletter but have not provided street addresses or landline numbers. Without these we cannot keep you informed on progress in your area. You can register here: <http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk/contact-us/register-for-more-information/>

Contract 2

This is split into a number of different parts. **Contract 2, Part 1** has been mapped and Wave 1 areas are already defined on the map and on the rolling 12-month plan. The next Wave will be announced in April, so that the next set of communities to benefit will be able to see at that point that their cabinet is due for upgrade. Waves are to be announced quarterly, but it should be noted that because Contract 2 is getting to some of the more challenging areas then each Wave may take up to 12 months to complete.

We have asked BT to model the coverage for **Contract 2, Part 2** but this has been held up because of State Aid issues. All public spending over a certain (quite low) threshold has to have what is called State Aid approval, and we have been operating under an umbrella scheme that was set up by BDUK. Unfortunately the approval of the scheme ended in July 2015, and has yet to be resolved. Although we accounted for additional money being brought into the Contract throughout the procurement period, we have been told that it is necessary to enter into another public consultation (see below). Also, as regular readers will know, we have applied for EU funding but until the State Aid issues are resolved we cannot move forward with this either.

So, for the present, Contract 2, Part 2 is on hold. We will keep everybody informed through this newsletter and our social media as we receive more information, as we hope to be able to advise more people in the white areas that they are being brought into the rollout programme.

Public consultation started

On Monday 7th March CSW Broadband launched a new consultation. This asks suppliers where they expect to be providing NGA-compliant broadband with speeds of at least 30Mbps. The purpose of the exercise is to ensure that CSW Broadband is not planning to spend money in an area that will be upgraded commercially. To do so would be in no-one's interest as we have no wish to compete with the private sector, and we don't want to be spending public money in an area that is commercially viable. The data from the suppliers will be provided under commercial confidentiality, so we can't give details of any provider's proposed coverage, although we will be mapping the information using the black/grey protocols that have been used previously, and this will be publicly available on our website. The consultation runs until 17:00 on 7th April and more information can be found at: www.cswbroadband.org.uk/consultation

New CSW Broadband coverage to be announced in April

In December we made an early announcement of the first Wave of cabinets to be upgraded under Contract 2, Part 1. In April we shall be announcing further cabinets that are to be brought into the programme. More information will be given through a newsletter, on our website, and through our social media channels. Further announcements will be made at quarterly intervals.

Virgin looking for broadband communities

Virgin Media are looking for communities to benefit from their £3bn network expansion. Clearly, as a commercial company, Virgin will want to ensure that it will get a good return on its investment, so is looking to go to areas where there is a high demand for fibre broadband. (This differs from the CSW Broadband project where our aim is to take the fibre network as far as possible and the project is publicly funded so does not look to make a commercial return).

Virgin are inviting residents to register their interest in fibre broadband by visiting: <https://my.virginmedia.com/customer-news/articles/cablemystreet.html>

It should be noted that CSW Broadband will publish our intended rollout plans months, or even years, ahead of the implementation, however commercial companies will be unlikely to do this. Therefore you may not be aware until the upgrades start in your area that Virgin will be providing services.

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/about-the-project/copy-to-use-on-your-own-website-newsletters-or-flyers/>

Questions and Answers

Here are some of the Q&As raised recently. Our newly revamped website has an updated set of Q&As.

Is the modelling for the CSW Broadband Project and the commercial rollout available publically?

No. The modelling will include information that is owned by BT and other providers and is commercially sensitive so that whilst the rollout areas are visible the underlying data is not.

How do I switch to a different broadband provider?

You may wish to transfer suppliers for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Poor quality of service
- You need additional features that your current internet service provider (ISP) does not offer
- You think the deal you are subscribed to is not providing good value for money
- You are moving house/business premises

First of all, check if the contract period you signed for with your existing supplier has expired. Contracts are generally for either 12 or 18 months. Most contracts require you to give a month's

notice, even after the initial 12 or 18 months. If it hasn't expired, you may be liable for a cancellation fee or even the balance of the fee until the contract runs out. It's your choice if you decide you want to buy yourself out of a contract that hasn't yet expired.

It is important that you check that the new service you wish to sign up to is available in your area.

There are impartial sources of advice, such as:

- Which? Have a great broadband speed checker – easy to use and some good, impartial advice as well <http://tinyurl.com/l3o8d9s>
- Moneysaving Expert has lots of advice about switching provider: <http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/phones/cheap-broadband>

You can also use various comparison websites to check this – we've listed a few below. Please remember that comparison sites work by receiving a commission from the ISPs and may not list all of the available options. Therefore you may want to try several such sites before making a decision.

- www.moneysupermarket.com/broadband
- www.broadband-finder.co.uk
- www.broadbandchoices.co.uk
- www.cable.co.uk

Are there other options that will provide an increase in speed even if it is not superfast?

BT has a product called Unlimited Faster Broadband that offers up to 17Mbps. Availability will depend on you being able to connect to a fibre cabinet, but your predicted speed being below superfast levels. The availability is likely to depend on the infrastructure between your home and the fibre cabinet. For more information go

to http://bt.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/47740/~/what-is-unlimited-faster-broadband%3F

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.

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

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

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

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

Newsletter BroadbandNews@cswbroadband.org.uk

All enquiries Broadband@cswbroadband.org.uk