



Bringing faster broadband to our rural areas
Project Update September 2018
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we need to spread the word!

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Over 63000 properties able to connect to the fibre network

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New map – updated Open Market Review

Before going out to tender for Contract 3, we were required to carry out an Open Market Review, which meant that we asked all of the commercial broadband providers where they had plans to provide services before the end of 2019. This is because, as a publicly funded project, we obviously cannot spend money where there is already planned superfast broadband provision.

As a result of the information that we received, when our procurement was carried out it only included those areas where there was no planned provision before the end of 2019. Because some of the providers are smaller companies (known as AltNets) their coverage has been marked with a pink circle and denoted as “Under Review”. We carried out the first review last year, which resulted in no significant change.

However, the 2018 review has just been completed, and this has resulted in some very significant changes in the proposed coverage across the area. For instance:

- **ITS** – This business had originally planned to cover a very large area of south Warwickshire with wireless broadband. However, the business has undergone a restructure and has new management in place. The focus of the business is now on fibre rollouts, and ITS now considers wireless as an infill measure rather than the only available solution. This means that the business case that they used to develop their original response to the Open Market Review has changed considerably and, as a result, the latest return from this company has released much of the area that they had originally planned to cover.

If your area has now been “released” by a company

This means that there is no longer any planned coverage in the area. CSW broadband has already contracted all of the funding that is currently available, but now that the area has been released it may be considered for inclusion in any future modelling if we are successful in attracting additional funding.

This does not mean that you have to wait for an indefinite period of time, however. The Government has launched the Gigabit Voucher Scheme, which is ideal for most areas where there is no planned coverage. Gigabit vouchers can be used by small and medium-sized businesses and the local communities surrounding them to contribute to the installation cost of a full-fibre gigabit-capable connection.

Businesses can claim up to **£3,000** against the cost of connection either individually or as part of a group project. Residents can benefit from the scheme as part of a group project, which also includes businesses, and can claim for a voucher of up to a value of **£500**.

One gigabit is the same as 1,000 megabits – so it’s a big leap forward in connection speeds that could benefit you and your home or business into the future. Once the infrastructure is installed, you don’t have to pay for a full Gigabit service, as there are packages available to suit all requirements.

The scheme is supplier-led, so in the first instance you need to choose which supplier you wish to use. Most suppliers will help you to get community projects off the ground, so that the whole of your village or the wider area can benefit.

For full details about whether you are eligible for a voucher and to connect you to a full fibre broadband supplier, go to: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk>

Please note: CSW Broadband has no involvement in the administration of this scheme, and we are unable to respond to queries about it.

Gigabit Vouchers Event

Because choosing a Gigabit Voucher supplier can seem to be quite a daunting task, we are arranging an event with Stratford District Council to enable residents and businesses to meet a selection of suppliers and to discuss your specific requirements with them.

The event will be held on **THURSDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER** from 11am – 3pm at Stratford District Council’s offices, Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford CV37 6HX.

This is a drop-in event, and you are advised to arrive early so that you can maximise the opportunity to talk to as many suppliers as possible. The event is open to all, residents from across the CSW Broadband project area, parish councils, community groups and businesses.

Ten suppliers have so far committed to attend the event, in addition to the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC), Rural Community Council and, of course, members of the CSW Broadband team.

We hope to see you there!

Setting up an “Accountable Body”

If you do decide to set up a project to use the Gigabit Voucher Scheme, then you will need an “Accountable Body”. This might be a Community Interest Company, or similar. You don’t have to go it alone. In the first instance, contact [Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action](#) who are able to give advice and guidance on the best route to take, and how to set up your Accountable Body. They are a mine of information for all sorts of community and voluntary enterprises, and also have information about funding streams for voluntary groups!

Case Study – Nuco International

Nuco International, based at the Meriden Business Park on the edge of Coventry, are experiencing the benefits of gigabit capable speeds following the completion of their upgraded broadband connection, supported by the pilot of the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme in Coventry & Warwickshire.

Up until December 2017, the company had enjoyed download speeds of 100 megabits per second (Mbps) and upload speeds of 40 Mbps with a full fibre cabinet sited on their business park with a copper connection from the cabinet to the business. This was more than enough for their IT needs until they decided to migrate to cloud-based Microsoft Office 365. It quickly became apparent that the increase in data traffic to and from the cloud had an impact on the speed of connectivity.

Nuco International’s IT & Project Manager, Mark Langan, contacted their local supplier, Glide (formerly WarwickNet) to enquire about an affordable solution that would be scalable and allow for further transitions to the cloud. Installation was complete by February 2018 and the £3,000 cost of the installation was paid through the gigabit voucher scheme (excluding the VAT).

He said: “We were already keen on upgrading our infrastructure to a full fibre-to-the-premise (FTTP) connection but the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme made it a much more cost-effective solution. We’re now getting three times the speed for no extra cost.

The process of upgrading to full fibre to our office was relatively hassle free. The support team were on hand and sorted out everything within a day.”

Nuco International now enjoys ultrafast download speeds of 250 Mbps and upload speeds of 50 Mbps. Mark added: “It’s allowed us to think about what else we can put in the cloud. The next thing we’re looking at is transferring our hosting servers so it’s great to have the option and the infrastructure in place. We’ve got an office in Hong Kong and, with operations continuing to grow, transitioning to the cloud will allow us to increase our scalability.”

The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme now operates nationally and the Government has allocated £67 million for more businesses to benefit from vouchers worth up to £3,000. Businesses in Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire can access more details about the scheme by visiting <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk>

Local Full Fibre Networks Programme

Due diligence work has been ongoing, and we are now working towards issuing the Invitation to Tender during the autumn. In line with Government requirements, the project will focus on bringing Ultrafast (1Gbps) connectivity to public buildings. The successful bidder may decide to use the new fibre as a springboard to cover a wider area, but for State Aid reasons that cannot be part of the tender evaluation.

Copy for your own website or newsletter

We have [short articles of around 300 words that can be downloaded](#) to use in your own newsletters or on websites. These are updated monthly.

Questions and Answers

Here are some of the Q&A's raised recently. Our website has a full set of Q&As, which are regularly updated.

My area is no longer shown as having any planned coverage. What can I do?

Since we have received new information from the commercial suppliers, some areas which were due to be covered are now no longer expected to achieve superfast speeds without further intervention. If CSW Broadband is successful in achieving additional funding, then these areas can be considered for being included in the modelling. However, there is no guarantee that any further funding will be forthcoming, or which areas it could cover.

The best solution, therefore, is to investigate the Gigabit Voucher Scheme (see above).

You can find more [frequently asked broadband questions](#) on our website.

Help us to spread the word!

We need to reach as many people as we possibly can. You can help us by emailing this to all your local contacts and encouraging them to email it to all their contacts.

Why not join the CSW Broadband conversation on social media!

To keep up to date on what we're doing and to have your say on how the project develops:

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For **newsletter** enquiries, please use: broadbandnews@cswbroadband.org.uk

For **all other enquiries**, please use: broadband@cswbroadband.org.uk

So that you don't miss out on any important news updates from the CSW Broadband team, please ensure that these are enabled in your firewall.

To find out more about the project, please visit the [CSW Broadband website](#).



CSW Broadband is a partnership between Warwickshire County Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Coventry City Council, BT and Department for Culture Media & Sport.