

SUPERFAST BROADBAND ANNUAL UPDATE 2014/15

1. Worcestershire County Council signed a £20 million contract with BT in August 2013 (contract 1) to ensure Superfast Broadband is available to over 90% of the County's residential and 90% of business premises by June 2016.
2. Since the last scrutiny update in May 2015, a second contract (contract 2) was signed for £5.9m [WCC £4.78m BT £1.12m] to provide fibre coverage to a further 9154 premises. Superfast Worcestershire partnership programme will now benefit 65,500 (94%) Worcestershire rural homes and businesses with access to fibre broadband infrastructure.
3. The table below shows the main sources of funding for both contracts 1 and 2.

Source of Funding	Value
BT	£10.4 million
WCC	£8.5 million
BDUK	£6.9 million
Local Growth Fund	£2.4 million

4. The Superfast Worcestershire programme will also ensure that all premises in the County have access to the universal basic service commitment of 2 mbps download speeds.
5. There are eight phases to contract 1 and two phases to contract 2. The first premises were connected, ahead of schedule in May 2014 and we are currently delivering phase 5. Deployment for Contract 1 will be completed by June 2016 and September 2017 for Contract 2.
6. Engineering work, in Worcestershire started at the end of May 2014 – this was after a period of careful surveying and planning. As at 30 September 2015, more than 41,820 premises, served from 255 cabinets will now be able to connect to fibre broadband as a result of the programme. BT has consistently exceeded their contractual commitment, delivering faster and within budget.
7. BT modelled the solution on the Superfast white postcodes¹ as specified in the Speed and coverage template by Worcestershire County Council. The deployment plan takes the results of the proposed solution to maximise the delivery of fibre at the lowest cost to achieve Worcestershire's overall 90% coverage and specific 90% business premises target. Whilst at the same time delivering in line with the BDUK and Worcestershire County Council requirements to ensure that we provide value for money.
8. County Council and BT officers work together at County Hall to jointly plan and ensure effective deployment of the infrastructure across Worcestershire – this partnership approach has ensured swift issue resolution, coordinated customer engagement and a team approach to highways and planning requirements.
9. BT remain confident that the programme will continue to deliver as planned. Whilst there have been operational challenges which could have delayed the programme, the impact of these has been mitigated. The programme is currently ahead of schedule with the

¹ Areas of the County deemed not commercially viable by any supplier as part of the open market review.

majority of future structures already planned or being built.

10. The first Rural Community Broadband Fund (DEFRA Communities) structures will start to be deployed between October 2015 and December 2015. However, the majority of these structures will be deployed between January 2016 and March 2016 with any remaining structures completed in April 2016 and May 2016. The Superfast Worcestershire website contains all the up to date information on structures that are going and have gone live and should be the first point of call for residents trying to find out when they can order the new services.
11. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) undertook an external review of the Superfast Worcestershire Programme and reported high levels of confidence that the required level of contract management is in place, concrete evidence of sustained assurance activity, and excellent levels of knowledge and compliance with contractual mechanisms.
12. The BT solution has been designed to deliver an open access fibre network enabling any Communication Provider and Retail Service Provider to access the network and offer their fibre products and services to the market. This means that the residents and businesses of Worcestershire have a true choice of who they choose to supply their broadband service.
13. Value for money is closely scrutinised by BT and the Worcestershire project team. Both contracts have been rigorously assessed by BDUK and Worcestershire's own external experts to ensure value for money was evidenced.
14. Each quarter, a County Council audit officer and finance officer, along with BDUK, work through the formal "Milestone to Cash" process, to ensure ongoing and regular auditing of the programme. This requires BT to provide extensive detail of work undertaken in the preceding quarter and BT can only claim for actual expenditure incurred and evidenced.
15. BT is only paid when the Council and BDUK are fully assured that what has been claimed is correct. Furthermore, any overspend is at BT risk, whereas efficiencies and underspend are re-invested in the project to extend reach or further improve speeds in the county.
16. Success of the programme is also measured by Take-Up, where a higher than predicted take-up will drive further benefits to the programme, Worcestershire County Council and the residents/businesses of Worcestershire. Currently the programme is significantly ahead of plan, currently c.20%² compared to the predicted c.4% at this time in the project.
17. The BDUK website also highlights the fact that Worcestershire is performing well against other BDUK contracts and in a number of cases is performing significantly better. This has been achieved because the Superfast team have stickered all live cabinets to say that superfast broadband is available. This is followed up by local advertising and postcards being delivered to every address. There has also been a radio campaign undertaken over the summer and currently there is a Social Media trial being undertaken within Worcestershire.

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² The c.20% figure does not include consideration of cabinets upgraded in the last 60 days