



NEWS RELEASE

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First communities to benefit from Connecting Cheshire's multi-million pound fibre broadband roll-out are announced

More than 15,000 premises are set to benefit from the first phase of investment in brand new fibre broadband networks across Cheshire, it was announced today.

From the end of March 2014 onwards high-speed broadband will become available in over 30 mainly outlying and rural communities across Cheshire including Alderley Edge, Hale Bank, Kelsall, Peover, Tarporley, Weaverham and Westwood near Warrington.

During the first phase, faster fibre broadband will be available for the first time in the following communities, where the majority of homes and businesses will be able to connect to the new network:

Cheshire East Council

Acton
Alderley Edge
Allostock
Aston
Brereton Green
Cranage
East of Crewe*
Holmes Chapel*

Hough
Nantwich*
Peover
Plumley
Twemlow Green
Warmingham
Wrenbury
Wybunbury

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Acton Bridge
Barton
Central Chester*
Christleton
Clutton
Davenham
Great Mollington
Guilden Sutton

Kelsall
Lach Dennis
Norley
Tarporley
Tarvin
Tattenhall
Weaverham
Wincham

Halton Council

Central Runcorn*
Hale Bank
Weston

Warrington Council

Central Warrington*
Dallam
Great Sankey*
Penketh*
Westwood
Winwick

* These areas will also see additional fibre roll-out building on the commercial coverage in phase one.

Details of the planned rollout were announced at a briefing held at Oulton Park attended by community representatives, councilors, business leaders and Digital Champions from around Cheshire.

The £28.5m Connecting Cheshire broadband programme will be delivered by Openreach - BT's local network business to bring fibre broadband to over 80,000 additional premises. This will build on the existing fibre networks already provided by BT's commercial investment, that will enable 96 per cent of Cheshire premises to access high speed broadband over the lifetime of the programme.

Maps and coverage information on the Connecting Cheshire website are available to provide greater detail on the areas that can expect fibre coverage to arrive under the first phase.

Additional information is now also available showing the proposed timescales for areas in the second and third phase of the programme, which are expected to see fibre availability from summer 2014 onwards for phase two, and from winter 2014 onwards for phase three. Local residents and businesses can check the coverage by visiting www.connectingcheshire.org.uk/check-availability to find out more. ¹

Bringing fibre to Cheshire is a massive engineering challenge for BT, with a team of over 100 planners and engineers working to upgrade exchanges and networks including laying more than 875 miles of fibre-optic cable – more than the distance between Lands End and John O' Groats – by spring 2015. Over 400 new roadside cabinets will also be installed as a new root and branch fibre-optic network is rolled-out.

Councillor David Brown, Deputy Leader of Cheshire East Council, on behalf of the Connecting Cheshire Partnership said: "I am delighted to announce which communities will soon be able to benefit from fibre broadband, I urge everyone to check our maps to see where and when we will be making fibre available.

"We have been working hard for over 3 years to get us to where we are today, this is an exciting time for Cheshire and the beginning of a journey that will see our communications landscape completely transformed."

¹ The information shown on the maps is subject to survey and may change; all information, including forecast dates, is indicative only. Forecast dates may move forwards as well as backwards; it is not necessarily the case that all premises within an area due to receive fibre broadband will receive it at the same time – different premises within that area may be served by different supporting infrastructure.



Bill Murphy, managing director of next generation access for BT Group, said: "This is a very exciting step forward for these communities because faster broadband can benefit everyone.

"Whether you're a small business wanting to stay in touch with customers and suppliers, or parents with children using the internet for homework and playing games, whatever you do online, you can do it much better and faster with fibre broadband.

"Fibre will have a significant impact on the local economy. We know, for example, that small businesses form a key part of the local economy in rural areas. Faster broadband breaks down the barriers to doing business in the digital world like online trading, which helps to empower those small businesses to find new markets, sell new products, try new models and compete on an equal footing with larger businesses."

Sir Howard Bernstein, vice chair of the North West European Regional Development Fund local management committee, said: "This programme will help local businesses make the most of superfast broadband, improving performance and helping to create and safeguard jobs.

"It will provide a major boost to the Cheshire economy and the North West European Regional Development Fund programme is pleased to be supporting it financially."

To view the Connecting Cheshire broadband rollout information and coverage map visit www.connectingcheshire.org.uk and click the Check Availability tab.

For enquiries about this news release please contact the Connecting Cheshire Media Relations Team on 01270 686577 or email: communications@cheshireeast.gov.uk

OR

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Note to Editors

Superfast Britain is a Government investment of £1.08bn in broadband and communication infrastructure across the UK. Run by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, this investment helps businesses to grow, creates jobs and will make Britain more competitive in the global race. The portfolio comprises three linked programmes:

- £780m to extend superfast broadband to 95 per cent of the UK by 2017;
- £150m to provide high speed broadband to businesses in 22 cities;
- £150m to improve quality and coverage of mobile phone and data network services.

Administered on behalf of Government by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), Superfast Britain is transforming Britain by promoting growth, enabling skills and learning, and improving quality of life. For further information: <https://www.gov.uk/broadband-delivery-uk>



About Connecting Cheshire

The Connecting Cheshire project was launched in April 2013, following the signing of the contract between four Cheshire councils (Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Halton Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council) and BT, which will see a total fibre broadband investment in the county of around £28.5m.

The project will reach those areas outside of any commercial broadband roll-out using a partnership approach to ensure all communities have access to the fastest possible broadband speeds.

About ERDF

The project is part financed by the North West Competitiveness Programme, European Regional Development Fund Programme 2007 to 2013. The Department for Communities and Local Government is the managing authority for the European Regional Development Fund Programme, which is one of the funds established by the European Commission to help local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support local businesses and create jobs. For more information visit www.gov.uk/erdf-programmes-progress-and-achievements

