

Thousands of Warwickshire residents to benefit from Phase 2 of Project Gigabit

We are pleased to announce that Warwickshire has been included in Phase 2 of Project Gigabit, the government's £5bn programme which aims to target – typically rural and hard to reach properties – that would have been left behind in broadband companies' own commercial roll-out plans.

The joint bid with Leicestershire (known as Lot 11) will see an estimated 118,400 properties upgraded across the Warwickshire and Leicestershire region and is in addition to the roll-out work that commercial providers are also undertaking in the area (e.g. Openreach's Fibre First programme).

Through the project, properties will be upgraded to speeds of up to 1,000 megabits or one gigabit per second - enough to download a HD movie in less than 30 seconds and lay the foundations for tomorrow's tech such as 8K-quality video streaming.

It also means families will no longer have to battle over bandwidth and will give people in rural areas the freedom to live and work more flexibly as well as providing the speed and reliability needed to start and run businesses in such areas.

It should be noted that while Project Gigabit will prioritise areas with sub-30Mbps speeds, this will not be to the exclusion of all else.

Bidders for the Lot 11 contract will be required to ensure that their networks are available for use by other ISPs via wholesale (open access). We are hoping that a number of operators, both big and small will bid for the work in our area.

The procurement process for this contract (which will be worth in excess of £114 million) is due to begin in November 2022 with the delivery contract starting in October 2023. We currently estimate that this work will be completed by the end of 2025, though we will be able to provide more detail on this once the contract has been awarded.

As usual, these won't be automatic upgrades for consumers, so once the new network is built then you'll still need to order it from their preferred ISP to benefit from it.

The government (DCMS) have been conducting various public reviews and OMRs, which is the process that they often use when trying to identify existing commercial coverage of gigabit-capable broadband networks and any planned coverage over the next 3 years.

By doing that, they can more easily target their support towards areas where commercial projects are not expected to reach (i.e. the intervention area).

With regards to the Solihull Metropolitan Borough area, it would appear – at this moment in time - that much of this area will be covered by commercial providers own deployment programmes but we should get further clarity on this in the coming months.

Mobile Connectivity Project – could we help your business?

If poor broadband speeds are impacting on your business then we may be able to help.

Over recent months, we have been testing a number of mobile Wi-Fi broadband devices in areas where the broadband is poor and the uplift in speeds in some cases has been particularly impressive.

Through our Mobile Connectivity Project, we have been able to secure some funding to purchase a number of these devices and we are now looking for SME's (Small to Medium-sized Enterprises) to take part in our ongoing 'proof of concept' trial of these technologies.

In particular, we are looking for SME's getting speeds of 5Mbps or less. (You can check what speeds your business can currently achieve using the [BT Broadband Availability Checker](#). Our [How to use the BT Broadband Availability Checker](#) webpage will help you make sense of the Broadband Checker results).

If your business meets the above criteria and you would like to be considered for this project, please email johnparmiter@warwickshire.gov.uk and gavintristram@warwickshire.gov.uk.

We will need the address, postcode and landline number associated with the business, along with a very brief description as to the nature of your business and how the lack of broadband provision is affecting the operation of that business.

Once we have this information, we will then need to check the mobile coverage in your area etc. which will help to determine whether we can potentially help you or not.

Applicants will be assessed for suitability on a first come, first serve basis.