



## Programme Update

### Somerset West and Taunton

Connecting Devon and Somerset, with support from DCMS, have today signed new contracts with three separate suppliers, **Airband, Truespeed and Wessex Internet**, that will deliver **full fibre** connectivity to **56,396 homes and businesses** across six procurement lots within Devon and Somerset including **Somerset West and Taunton** (see summary overleaf).

All local authorities covered by these contracts will benefit from an increase in full fibre coverage. For comparison, the previous Gigaclear contract was for 47,000 premises so these contracts represent a 20% increase in coverage overall.

Delivery will be in phases **between 2021 and 2024** and now the contracts have been placed, the CDS team will be able to share further detail in the New Year relating to the phasing and sequencing of the work.

**The contract covering Somerset West and Taunton has been awarded to Airband.**

The contractual commitment from all three suppliers is for **full fibre** which is Gigabit capable. This means that even if residents only require a Superfast (30Mbps) connection now, from day one it is capable of Ultrafast (100Mbps) or Gigabit (1,000Mbps) speeds when they require it.

The contracts are also for **open access** which means other internet service providers (ISPs) can provide their content over the new networks.

These contracts represent **public funding of £36.8 million** including **£12.3 million** from local authorities and the Heart of the South West LEP.

When commercial investment from all three suppliers is added, the total investment in the new contracts is **£77.9 million**.

Delivery will be in phases **between 2021 and 2024** and now the contracts have been placed, the CDS team will be able to share further detail in the New Year relating to the phasing and sequencing of the work.

The roll-out will be in the vanguard of the Government's ambitions to build a Gigabit capable network across the UK.

The three companies all have experience of working in the region and, between them, have already delivered connections to nearly 41,000 premises in the CDS region.

All three companies have regional offices in the CDS area and well established in-house and sub-contractor design and build capacity, backed by good supply chains.

## Summary of current and planned broadband coverage

- Total premises: 79,836 (*i.e. the number of homes or businesses in the area*)
- CDS superfast achieved: 28,985
- **CDS gigabit-capable planned: 7,923\***
- Commercial superfast achieved: 40,184
- Commercial planned: 756
- Current total delivered: 69,169 (89.24%)
- **Total delivered and planned 77,848 (97.51% up 10.87%)**
- Remaining: 1,988

### \*CDS gigabit-capable planned includes:

- 7,468 homes/businesses will receive full fibre from **Airband** under the new contracts.
- 455 will receive full fibre from **Openreach** under the CDS Fibre Extension Programme.

### Rural Gigabit Vouchers

In parallel with these initiatives, CDS works closely with Building Digital UK (BDUK) to expand take-up of the Government's Rural Gigabit Voucher programme. CDS offers support to communities who wish to contract with telecoms providers to design and shape bespoke broadband solutions for their areas. CDS will provide additional financial support where appropriate through its Community Challenge Programme to help bridge any local funding gaps.

### In Somerset West and Taunton, to date:

- **486 vouchers with a value of £919,232 have been issued.**
- **156 premises have been connected.**

*NB May include a mix of new connections and upgrades.*

CDS has delivered connectivity to more homes and businesses than any other broadband programme in England. *Source: DCMS*

Nearly one million homes and businesses in Devon and Somerset now have access to superfast broadband. Of these, over 300,000 homes and businesses have access to superfast broadband as a direct result of investment by CDS.

The Connecting Devon and Somerset programme is expected to deliver an £800 million boost to the regional economy. *Source: UK Broadband Impact Study, SQW*

CDS is one of the most cost-effective programmes in England with costs per premise in the lowest quartile nationally. *Source: BDUK.*

Take-up of CDS funded broadband services is nearly 70% compared with a national average of 61.4%, an increase of circa 5% over the last quarter. *Source: BDUK*

For more information go to <https://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/>

*Connecting Devon and Somerset  
Somerset West and Taunton,  
Summary of current and planned broadband coverage  
December 23, 2020*