

Better Broadband for Norfolk Information Sheet 9 (11 January 2013)

In May 2011 Norfolk County Council was successful in its bid to secure Government funding to help provide improved broadband speeds and access across Norfolk.

Since then a lot of work has been going on to ensure we can start making better broadband available as soon as possible, including demonstrating the demand that exists in Norfolk with our 'Say Yes to Better Broadband in Norfolk' campaign and asking private sector companies to bid to become our partner over the summer of 2012. BT's bid was selected as the preferred option and was approved by our Cabinet in September.

We want to keep the people of Norfolk informed and updated about the project and the work that is underway to provide better broadband services in the county. Read on for our latest update.

What's happened since the last update?

The contract between us and BT that makes the £41 million deal to bring better broadband to large parts of Norfolk was signed just before Christmas. This followed the European Union's approval of a UK wide State Aid scheme covering the provision of broadband in late November, following which Broadband Delivery UK assessed Norfolk's proposed contract for compliance under that scheme, allowing Norfolk's contract to be signed.

With the contract signed, work on the project can now get underway. BT is getting started on surveying locations around the county. This will allow BT to refine its draft designs to roll out its fibre network across the county to help ensure as many properties as possible can receive superfast broadband for the investment available.

So when will I know if I'm going to be able to receive better broadband as a result of the project?

Until the surveying and other planning work is done, we won't know quite what broadband speeds are possible in each area for the money available to the project. However the intention remains that by the end of 2015 more than 80 per cent of Norfolk's homes and businesses will be able to access superfast broadband (speeds of 24 Megabits per second and above) and every Norfolk premises will be able to access minimum broadband speeds of 2 Megabits per second (Mbps) - that's enough to watch BBC iPlayer on, for example.

We'll continue to keep people updated throughout the different stages of the project.

Does that mean Norfolk won't be getting better broadband until 2015?

No, the first new broadband services are due to be available by the end of this year. As infrastructure is upgraded over the next three years services will become available in phases. We'll announce which areas are included in the first phase later this year.

We know how keen people are to get better broadband, but please bear with us. We are moving as quickly as we can to make this happen and keep you informed. Without the project there would be no timetable for these improvements to happen, and it won't be long now until we start to see the difference better broadband will make to our county.

If you require further information please telephone Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020.