



November 2016  
update



**Make the Switch!**

To discover what fibre can do for you, you must opt-in by contacting your ISP

Enter your phone number or postcode into the checker at <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/when-and-where/> to find out about the availability of fibre broadband in your area.

## **A roundup of what's been going on in the programme**

### **Public consultation outcome**

Shropshire Council's Public Consultation to determine the State Aid classifications for the Connecting Shropshire programme's next procurement Intervention Area (Phase 2b) closed on 5th September 2016. Following responses from stakeholders, the following key principles have been included in the tender specification:

- Priority will be given to broadband solutions that serve premises on the slowest speeds (<15mbps), with the highest weighting for premises on download speeds of below 2mbps;
- Broadband solutions for premises registered for business rates will be weighted more favourably;
- To encourage competition from smaller suppliers, there will be two Lot areas;
- To realise economies of scale, we can aggregate the two contracts should the same supplier win both tender Lots;
- The assessment of the suppliers' solution design will be technologically neutral to comply with the State Aid decision notice;
- As part of the evaluation process, suppliers will need to consider coverage of whole communities and isolated premises;
- The evaluation process has been weighted to accommodate coverage at the lowest Next Generation Access (NGA) speed of 30mbps rather than incentivise suppliers to provide solutions of 100+mbps;
- There will be no priority given to any geographic area;
- A contingency sum of money will be included in the contracts to provide match-funding for community solutions, where there is no projected coverage planned in the winning bids;
- There is a contingency sum, which could be used to cover any 'under review' premises that aren't provided to within the next 3 years.

For more information, go to: <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/public-consultation-outcome/>

### **Phase 2b procurement**

Following the State Aid public consultation, Shropshire Council is inviting bids from telecoms suppliers for the third phase of the Connecting Shropshire broadband programme. Known as Phase 2b, the initiative is designed to bring fast broadband connections to premises where no commercial provision is currently in place or planned. The aim is to extend superfast broadband coverage to a further 16,015 premises in the Shropshire Council area using £11.7m public funding secured from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Broadband Delivery UK) and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.

To read the story in full, go to: <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/2016/11/bids-invited-for-phase-2b-of-the-connecting-shropshire-broadband-programme/>.

## 'Under review' areas in the procurement

The Connecting Shropshire programme area includes 3,728 'under review' premises. These premises are part of suppliers' planned commercial coverage area for Next Generation Access (NGA\*) broadband. The majority (92%) of these 'under review' premises are in the west of the Shropshire Council area where [Secure Web Services \(SWS\)](#) have committed plans to extend their network coverage commercially without the need for public subsidy.

Although SWS have provided credible and robust plans to provide NGA\* broadband to these 3,728 premises over the next three years, Shropshire Council has chosen to classify these premises as 'under review' in order to monitor progress. This means that these premises are not currently part of the next Phase 2b procurement specification.

In compliance with State Aid guidance\*\* (paragraph 65) Connecting Shropshire will monitor, scrutinize and verify SWS' plans at 6 monthly review points. Should their plans fall away, these premises will be considered for further public intervention by Connecting Shropshire.

Connecting Shropshire has retained a contingency sum in the Phase 2b procurement process which will, should the need arise, allow for 'under review' premises to be added to the contract where appropriate.

\* Next Generation Access (NGA) is broadband capable of delivering 30 Megabits per second

\*\* <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:025:0001:0026:EN:PDF>

## Computer skills for all

These days everything seems to be on the internet, and if you aren't sure how to use a computer you can feel left behind. There are lots of opportunities in Shropshire to have a go at using a computer for the first time. Across Shropshire, many sessions are run to help people to get to grips with the internet and feel comfortable using it.

Everyone is welcome at these sessions, and most sessions are free or ask for a small donation. If you have a laptop, bring it along or there are computers you can use. Many sessions are run by volunteers so it's advisable to check that a session is running before making a special trip. To see what's available, go to: <http://shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-council/computer-skills-for-all/> and click on the link to the 'Computer Skills Autumn/Winter 2016/17' leaflet at the bottom of the page. Alternatively, visit your local library or contact Connecting Shropshire for more information.



## Festive fibre display



Connecting Shropshire has been given the opportunity to project images onto the side of the Market Hall in Shrewsbury in the run up to Christmas.

So that we can make this display as visually-appealing and festive as possible, we're asking people to send in photos to show what Christmas in Shropshire means to them.

If you'd like your picture to be considered for this campaign or would like to find out more, please email [connecting.shropshire@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:connecting.shropshire@shropshire.gov.uk).

75 exchange areas are now 'accepting orders' with one or more cabinets providing fibre broadband thanks to Connecting Shropshire (the three latest additions are highlighted):

- Ackleton
- Acton Burnell
- Albrighton
- Bayston Hill
- Bettisfield
- Bishops Castle
- Bomere Heath
- Bridgnorth
- Bromfield
- Broseley
- Bucknell
- **Burwarton**
- Calverhall
- Childs Ercall
- Chirbury
- Chirk
- Church Stretton
- Claverley
- Clee Hill
- Cleobury Mortimer
- Clive
- Clun
- Cockshutt
- Craven Arms
- Cressage
- Cross Houses
- Dorrington
- Dudlestre Heath
- Ellesmere
- Great Bolas
- Hadnall
- Halfway House
- Hanwood
- Harlescott
- Highley
- Hodnet
- Ironbridge
- **Knighton**
- Knockin
- Lee Brockhurst
- Leebotwood
- Little Brampton
- Llanymynech
- Ludlow
- Market Drayton
- Marshbrook
- **Middleton Scriven**
- Montford Bridge
- Morville
- Much Wenlock
- Munslow
- Nesscliffe
- Norton
- Oswestry
- Pipegate
- Pontesbury
- Prees
- Quatt
- Queens Head
- Richards Castle
- Sambrook
- Seifton
- Shawbury
- Shifnal
- Shrewsbury
- Stoke St Milborough
- Tenbury Wells
- Tern Hill
- Upton Magna
- Wem
- Whitchurch
- Whixall
- Worfield
- Worthen
- Yockleton

## Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme



Margaret Davies uses a wireless broadband service

Connecting Shropshire is operating a Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme (funded by Broadband Delivery UK). The Scheme provides support towards the cost of the installation of a broadband connection (usually fixed wireless or satellite). You will only be eligible if your premises has access to download speeds of less than 2Mbps. Further details about the Scheme can be found at: <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/basic-broadband-subsidy-scheme/>

Since May 2016, Connecting Shropshire has issued 346 Subsidy Codes, of which 218 have been claimed. This puts us third in the national league table against other areas in the UK (behind Norfolk and Scotland).

## Contact Details

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