



January 2018 update



Contract 3 update

Since signing the contract in July, Airband have been hard at work acquiring high sites and gearing up to deliver superfast broadband connectivity to Shropshire homes and businesses. Airband has been providing access to high-speed wireless broadband in rural areas since 2002.



The project is being delivered over 5 phases. Each phase consists of a 'survey & design' stage, followed by a 'build' stage and finally a 'go live' stage.

Airband are currently at the build stage for phase 1, meaning that transmitter sites are being constructed and the broadband equipment is being installed. The first sites in phase 1 went live over Christmas.

At the same time, Airband are in the 'survey & design' stage for the second phase of the project, which will start to 'go live' in the spring.

To register your interest, enter your postcode on the Airband website at <https://home.airband.co.uk/coverage/>. Thereafter, Airband will update you as soon as information becomes available.

First site goes live

Connecting Shropshire and Airband have recently announced the live launch of the first transmitter site, serving over 300 homes and businesses. The transmitter provides superfast broadband connectivity of 30Mbps to parts of Sheriffhales and Shifnal parishes, and other communities further east, such as Tong.

Airband's deployment of fixed wireless broadband works by sending a radio signal from a transmitter site to a small receiver attached to the property. A cable is then run into the building allowing the end-user to access the internet in the same way as other broadband connections. To read the full story, go to: <http://shropshire.gov.uk/news/2018/01/superfast-broadband-rollout/>



Airband transmitters are located to have a far-reaching view to provide access to superfast broadband to as many properties as possible.

Website changes

To reflect the fact that we now have contracts with two different broadband infrastructure suppliers, Airband & Openreach, we've updated the When & where page (<http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/when-and-where/>). The page now reads as follows:

Connecting Shropshire broadband infrastructure deployment

Using approved public funding, Connecting Shropshire has commissioned Airband and Openreach to install infrastructure capable of providing Shropshire premises with access to superfast broadband*.

Airband

Airband have a contract to cover 14,000 premises by 2020. To find out if you're in Airband's current or planned coverage area, please enter your postcode on their website:

<https://home.airband.co.uk/coverage/>

Openreach

Openreach have a contract to cover 4,000 premises by summer 2018. To find out if you're in Openreach's current or planned coverage area, please enter your landline or postcode on their website:

<https://www.homeandbusiness.openreach.co.uk/fibre-broadband/when-can-i-get-fibre>.

This link also enables you to check Openreach's commercial deployment plans.

Planned/current superfast broadband* coverage (due to be updated in spring 2018)

Click the following link to access Connecting Shropshire's interactive map (searchable by postcode) showing the planned/current superfast broadband coverage in the Shropshire Council area up to 2020:

<https://shropshire.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ddc8d72666934ca4ab4f938050be4ee4>

Other broadband infrastructure providers in Shropshire

The following providers are not publicly funded by Shropshire Council, but they did respond to our latest Open Market Review.

Secure Web Services (SWS)

Secure Web Services has infrastructure that provides around 25,000 premises in the Shropshire Council area with access to superfast broadband* (mainly in the west of the county).

To check coverage, go to:

http://www.securewebservices.co.uk/page/home_coverage/index.html?activetree=home_coverage

Virgin Media

Virgin Media has infrastructure that provides around 3,200 premises in the Shropshire Council area with access to superfast broadband* (mainly in Albrighton & Shifnal).

To check coverage, go to: <http://www.virginmedia.com/shop/broadband/>

* defined as 30mbps

Universal Service Obligation (USO) for broadband

Source: House of Commons Library briefing: <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8146>

What is the broadband USO?

The UK Government is introducing a Universal Service Obligation (USO) for broadband as part of its commitment in the [UK Digital Strategy](#) (March 2017) to ensure that the UK has world-class digital connectivity and inclusion.

The new USO is a UK-wide measure, intended to fill the gap left by the UK Government's existing broadband roll-out programs, to deliver broadband connections to the hardest to reach premises in the UK. The USO is intended to provide a legal right to request a broadband connection of at least 10 Mbps download speed, up to a reasonable cost threshold.

The [Digital Economy Act 2017](#) gives the UK Government the power to implement the USO via secondary legislation. The Act also allows for the Government to review the USO and to increase the minimum speed. There was broad cross-party and consumer support for the introduction of a statutory USO for broadband in general, but there were mixed views from industry stakeholders as to how universal access to broadband should be delivered.

How will it be implemented?

The UK Government was considering two options for the delivery of its aim for universal access to broadband connections with at least 10 Mbps download speeds by 2020:

- a regulatory approach implemented by secondary legislation; and
- a proposal by BT to deliver the service voluntarily.

The Government announced in December 2017 that it would adopt the regulatory approach. Under this framework, the USO will be demand-led. This means that consumers will have a right to request a connection. A universal service provider (most likely BT) will be obliged to build all reasonable requests up to cost threshold (£3,400 proposed). The USO is expected to be funded by a cost-sharing industry fund.

When will the USO be implemented?

The Government is aiming for the USO to be in place by 2020 at the latest. Secondary legislation is expected to be laid before Parliament in early 2018. Responsibility will then fall to Ofcom to implement the USO.

Technical specifications

The minimum technical standards proposed for the USO proposed are:

- Minimum download speed of 10 Mbps.
- Minimum upload speed of 1 Mbps.
- Additional quality parameters: medium response times, a minimum data cap of 100 GBs and a contention rate of 50:1 (a maximum of 50 users to share one bandwidth).

A mix of technologies that meet the minimum specifications will be used to deliver the service. Satellite connections are unlikely to fulfil the additional quality parameters, but will probably be the only option for some consumers (approx. 0.2%).

How many premises will be affected?

Ofcom reported that as of May 2017, 1.1 million premises (4%) in the UK would qualify for the USO, based on the proposed technical specifications.

The USO is intended to be available only to those consumers that do not have broadband connections that fulfil the minimum standards available, not those who have such a connection available but choose not to subscribe to it. Due to the demand-led structure, the number of premises covered by the regulatory USO will ultimately depend on the number of consumers that register.

Connecting Shropshire comment

The proposed USO would provide a safety net outside of the scope of the Connecting Shropshire programme and does not impact on our aspiration to provide access to superfast broadband for all premises in the Shropshire Council area by 2020.

Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme - extended

The Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme provides support towards the cost of the installation of a broadband connection. This national Scheme was established and is funded by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and it's administered locally by Shropshire Council.

Originally, the Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme was expected to close at the end of December 2017. However, the government has confirmed that that the Scheme will continue through 2018. This means that people unable to access download speeds of more than 2Mbps will still be able to apply to the Scheme to get an 'interim solution' in advance of them benefitting from superfast broadband coverage. Further details about the scheme can be found at: <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/basic-broadband-subsidy-scheme/>.

Case study: GPC74 near Cleobury Mortimer

A South Shropshire business, which specialises in a diverse range of construction and facilities management services throughout the UK, is reaping the commercial benefits of their recent upgrade to superfast fibre broadband.

Robin Guest, IT Support at [GPC74 Ltd](http://www.gpc74.co.uk), based on the outskirts of Cleobury

Mortimer, said the new technology has transformed the way they work in the four months since they upgraded, enabling them to share information more easily and complete jobs more quickly.

As a result, the family-run business, which currently employs 13 people at its Upper Baveney Park headquarters, and a further 18 staff who are out and about serving rural client sites around the country, is set for further expansion in the coming months. To read the full case study, go to:

<http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/2017/12/case-study-gpc74-in-south-shropshire/>.



Broadband grants available to eligible businesses

The Marches and Gloucestershire Business Broadband Grant Scheme provides local eligible businesses up to £25,000 to fund the installation of superfast broadband connections. The funding is designed to support qualifying businesses that cannot access superfast broadband at the moment and are not within any clearly defined roll out plans to receive superfast broadband.

The grant is to fund the associated capital costs of delivery and installation of the solution to your premises. However, the grant does not cover the ongoing monthly costs of the solution. Applicants are responsible for paying the monthly cost through the contract term.

Is Poor Internet Slowing Down Your Business?

(100% grant funding now available for SuperFast Broadband infrastructure)

Marches and Gloucestershire Broadband Grants are designed to help SME businesses in Shropshire

- ✔ That do not get broadband speeds of 30 Mbps or more
- ✔ That are not in a contracted broadband rollout plan
- ✔ That are hampered by poor broadband

If so, your business could get a grant of up to £25,000!!

Think you qualify for the scheme? Log on to **www.mgbroadbandgrants.com**

Please note European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) eligibility rules apply to all grants



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund


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