



Superfast Broadband for Notts – An update

Nottinghamshire County Council and all the Nottinghamshire local councils have match-funded the Government's commitment of £4.25m towards broadband improvements in the County.

The current £867,000 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) bid is in the final appraisal stages and a final decision on whether approval will be granted or not is anticipated by the end of September 2012.

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) is managing the Government's £530 million initiative to bring faster broadband speeds to the UK. The Council has committed to using the BDUK Framework to procure a single or lead private sector delivery partner to co-fund and then deliver the installation of broadband infrastructure across the County, and is waiting for more information from Government on Nottinghamshire's individual timetable and call-off slot. During his keynote speech on 20 August, the then Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt confirmed that Government is not expecting to receive State Aid approval until the autumn (www.culture.gov.uk/news/ministers_speeches/9299.aspx). This clearly affects the ability of the Council to enter the procurement stage. Until the Council enters the procurement phase, neither the precise locations nor mix of technologies to be deployed can be confirmed with any certainty.

Investing significant sums of public money in a competitive commercial market is not straight-forward and upgrading the infrastructure is but one element of this complex project. The whole project hinges on finding a suitable firm willing to make the (anticipated) £8.5 million private sector match-funding investment, and to do that the Council first has to prove demand exists. The Council has launched the *Superfast Broadband for Notts campaign* to allow people to register their interest www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/broadband/. The aim is to achieve 5,000 pledges of support by the autumn. To date, over 3,000 responses have been received but this falls short of a convincing case that will see the telecommunications industry match-fund the public sector commitment.

There are three routes to pledging support:

- Pledge on-line via hosted button or at: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/broadband/>
- Phone 08449 80 80 80 to pledge
- Fill in a paper pledge form (copies available by calling 0115 977 2931)

Future updates on the plan will be made available at: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/broadband/.

The project has its own Facebook page. Please pay us a visit at: <http://www.facebook.com/nottinghamshirebroadband> 'like' the page and leave a comment.