



## Connecting Dartmoor and Exmoor update

- **Progress to date**
- **When will the first areas be live?**
- **Where and When maps**
- **What the network will offer**
- **How to get a service**

### Progress to date

Airband, the wireless broadband contractor for Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, has recently announced that their wireless transmitters are live on South West Dartmoor. Airband is now working with Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) and BDUK to finalise arrangements for the 'wholesale open access platform' that will make the service available to a range of internet service providers. The necessary testing of the systems and network to make sure it is stable will commence at the start of May. This should be concluded in a matter of weeks after which businesses and residents fed by the live transmitters can place an order.

### When will the first areas be live?

The CDS team is making preparations for an event at the end of May that will launch the network to areas that are live on Dartmoor. By then it is expected that over 1,000 premises on Dartmoor will have access to a wireless superfast service focused on the area to the South West of the moor. All parishes that are capable of receiving a wireless signal will be contacted by the CDS team to inform them when they are live. Installation of the rest of the network is progressing well across Dartmoor, many now have planning permission and the remaining few applications are expected to be submitted in the next 2 weeks. It was hoped that the build of the network would have been completed by the end of March; however the spell of wet weather has severely hampered the build in some places. Some of the challenges experienced by the build teams have included difficulties in getting the diggers and cherry pickers up steep hills in the wet conditions as well as having to locate poles where there is granite underground.

On Exmoor, around 10 planning applications for the core network have now been submitted and are going through public consultation, with the first approval received already. A further 29 planning applications are due to be submitted over the coming months. Network build on Exmoor is expected to begin towards the end of May and the first connections are expected in the summer.

### Where and When maps

The CDS team have been working with Airband to develop a specific map for Dartmoor and Exmoor. The map will be at a premise level and will also show the anticipated reach of the wireless signal across the 2 National Parks through the use of a 'heatmap'. The map will be available on the CDS website to coincide with the launch of the network at the end of May and will not only show if your premises will be able to receive a service but also will give an indication of when it is expected to be live.

## **How it works**

Fixed Wireless Broadband, also known as Fixed Wireless Access (FWA), is a type of high-speed internet access where connections use radio signals rather than cables. Fixed Wireless Broadband utilises transmission masts or poles which house radios that communicate to smaller radio receivers at customers' premises. The technology uses specific radio frequencies to transmit signals through the air without wires or cables, in much the same as mobile phones.

The Airband network specialises in remote and rural areas, it uses point-to-point, radio wave, wireless technology that is specifically designed to avoid interference from natural obstructions such as trees, hills and buildings. The network will provide broadband speeds of 30Mbps

## **How to get a service**

The public funding that has been provided to support the deployment of a new network across Dartmoor and Exmoor has a requirement attached to it that the network must be 'open access'. What this means is that Internet Service Providers (ISP's) must be given the opportunity to be able to provide a service to end users across the network, therefore providing choice to the end consumer.

A 'Wholesale Access Platform' the mechanism that provides the 'open access' to ISP's has been in the development stage for a number of months and will be reaching its conclusion over the coming weeks. Once live, local and national ISP's will be able to register with Airband Community Internet (Airband's Network Infrastructure and Wholesale Retail arm) to provide a service over their wireless network. Once the network goes live, a range of providers, including Airband Ltd (Airband's ISP retail arm), will be able to offer broadband packages to residents and businesses and we anticipate that the number of providers will increase over time.

When an area is live, residents and businesses should contact one of the providers offering a service on the network and ask for details of their packages. Depending on the provider, there may be a connection charge and a monthly fee that is broadly comparable to other fibre broadband packages.

Information on how to get connected will be available on the [CDS](#) and [Airband](#) websites to coincide with the launch of the network at the end of May.

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## **About Connecting Dartmoor & Exmoor**

The Connecting Dartmoor and Exmoor programme is led by Connecting Devon and Somerset Partnership with the support of Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities. It is being delivered by Airband Community Internet and will connect 5,800 homes, farms and businesses across the two National Parks using fixed wireless broadband technology.

It kick-starts phase two of the publicly-funded Connecting Devon and Somerset broadband programme which aims to provide 95% of Devon and Somerset with superfast broadband. The Connecting Dartmoor and Exmoor programme for the South West's two National Parks is due to be completed at the end of 2016, one year ahead of the Government's 95% target.