

Connecting Devon and Somerset Update

Phase 2 Procurement

In July Connecting Devon and Somerset partnership (CDS) issued its open tender to extend the superfast broadband scheme in phase two. £39.5m of public sector investment will deliver Next Generation Access broadband services (a minimum of 30 Mbps) and ultrafast broadband (of speeds greater than 100 Mbps) to tens of thousands of homes and businesses across Devon and Somerset in predominantly rural areas.

The overall investment figure is anticipated to rise as successful tenderers will be expected to provide further capital investment in the programme. Potential suppliers will set out their plan to connect as many people as possible for the available budget by the end of 2017, and CDS will have confirmed a contract and plan by the end of this year.

Divided into six bidding lots to encourage greater competition from a broader range of providers and technologies, the phase two intervention area is comprised of premises that have received no superfast Next Generation Access under phase one, are outside of central urban areas that CDS are encouraging to be served by the market, and have not been identified in the OMR as part of a private commercial rollout.

The tax-payer subsidised CDS programme has focused phase two on rural areas and as such provided contractual incentive to suppliers to deliver step changes in speeds; benefitting those who need it most.

This second phase builds on the success of phase one of the publically-funded CDS programme and comes after our milestone announcement connecting a quarter of a million premises to superfast broadband. This means CDS remains well on track to meet its target of connecting around 275,000 premises to superfast broadband by the end of 2016, as agreed with the Government.

National Parks

The new tender builds on the phase two National Parks programme already underway in our most difficult to reach areas of Dartmoor and Exmoor. CDS will have by the end of 2016 delivered superfast speeds to around 5,800 premises across the moors, boosting the rural economy.

Airband Community Ltd, the wireless broadband contractor for Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, have concluded their network testing on Dartmoor and have begun to roll out the service to selected communities on an incremental basis. The build on Dartmoor is expected to be complete by the early autumn. Meanwhile on Exmoor the network is being installed and we hope to be able to announce the first connections there in the early autumn.

Voucher Scheme

The CDS Broadband Voucher Scheme, which provides anyone with a broadband speed of less than 2 Mbps with a voucher for £500 towards the cost of a new broadband connection, has received in excess of 2,000 applications. Of these over 1,500 have been approved and the first installations have already been completed. 13 suppliers have joined the scheme with more in the pipeline.

Further details can be found on the CDS website

at: <http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/cds-broadband-voucher-scheme/>

We would appreciate it if you could publish this update online or in parish noticeboards to ensure as many communities as possible are informed.

The CDS team