Welcome to the spring edition of our Superfast Worcestershire newsletter

“Superfast Worcestershire is taking coverage even further than we had originally envisaged. Thousands more Worcestershire households and businesses can look forward to a fibre broadband boost thanks to a £3.7 million pound expansion. This latest announcement shows the commitment of the partnership to ensuring that Worcestershire is connected. It is great news that more people will be able to benefit from the new communications technology that is often taken for granted by those who already have access to superfast speeds.”

Cllr Ken Pollock, Cabinet Member responsible for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure

With spring around the corner we’re delighted to announce that around 245,000 premises in Worcestershire are able to connect to fibre broadband. Of these, over 62,000 premises are able to connect as a result of the Superfast Worcestershire Broadband Programme, and the number continues to rise.

In this edition of our newsletter, find out:

• How we’re expanding fibre broadband coverage
• Which Worcestershire businesses are loving fibre broadband
• Where we are delivering Fibre to the Premises

...and much, much more!
Thousands more households and businesses to get fibre broadband boost thanks to £3.7 million pound expansion

We are delighted to announce a major £3.7 million pound expansion that will enable over 3,000 more households and businesses to access superfast broadband for the first time.

Additional communities across all six districts in Worcestershire have been earmarked for upgrades as part of the multi-million pound roll-out, including parts of Wickhamford, Throckmorton, Wick, Heightington, Teme Valley including Eardiston and Stockton on Teme, Holt Fleet, Shelsley Beauchamp and Berrow Green.

The upgrade work will begin in 2017 and take approximately 18 months to complete. It is being funded by a combination of efficiencies and BT investing new funds as well as some reinvestment of earlier funding. This is under the terms of a ‘Gainshare’ mechanism in the contract, triggered by strong take up of fibre broadband. Nearly 40 per cent of county households and premises able to upgrade to the new technology have already chosen to do so.

The postcode checker on the website, which people can use to find out if their postcode is included in the roll-out, will be updated in the coming weeks.

Worcestershire businesses love the benefits of fibre broadband

Firms across Worcestershire say they are loving the way high-speed fibre broadband is helping them to improve the way they do business.

It’s nearly six months since Worcestershire County Council reached its target of making faster fibre broadband available to 90 per cent of county businesses - and the number of firms putting the technology at the heart of their business continues to grow.

Among them are firms which will be making particular use of the technology in order to boost business, including Luxury Hampers and Gifts in Worcester and The Goldsmithy jewellers in Broadway.
Councillor Ken Pollock, Worcestershire County Council Cabinet Member responsible for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure, said: “It’s great to see businesses benefitting from a superfast broadband boost as a result of Superfast Worcestershire. The programme helps to ensure Worcestershire is and remains ‘open for business’.

“The importance of fibre-based broadband cannot be overstated in this digital age and is providing a real boost for the local economy. Having faster connectivity to the internet is crucial to business development and a major factor in the success of Worcestershire’s business community.”

Business blooming at Worcester’s Floral Roundabout thanks to superfast broadband

Floral Roundabout, based in Sidbury, Worcester, has been creating fabulous floral displays in the heart of Worcester for almost fifty years.

The team at Floral Roundabout have many years of experience and have built up a fantastic network of contacts within the industry. The team have a passion for creativity and craftsmanship, and are committed to delivering fabulous flowers across the city and wider area.

Owner Lydia McPherson took over the running of the business in December 2016. Having a fast and reliable internet connection is crucial to the business, so Lydia upgraded to superfast broadband as soon as the service was available. The business is connected to cabinet Worcester 18, which was upgraded to superfast broadband by our programme.

Floral Roundabout relies on a fast internet connection to support their online shop and to market the business online. Lydia and the team regularly update their website, Facebook page, Pinterest and Instagram, so a fast connection is crucial.

Lydia said: “Being able to quickly upload and publish photos of our beautiful flowers is incredibly important in order to keep Floral Roundabout current. Having a fast connection improves our productivity and we don’t have to worry about buffering. “We also offer an online shop and online reminder service, so important dates won’t be forgotten. It’s great having a fast and reliable connection and I’m looking forward to seeing the business grow over the coming months.”
Fibre broadband spics up North Worcestershire pub specialising in Caribbean cuisine

The Red Lion is a country pub in the rural location of Holt Heath, North Worcestershire, just six miles from Stourport-on-Severn, Worcester and Droitwich.

Tenant and chef Victoria Cullen's speciality is traditional, flavousome Caribbean cuisine. Born in Nigeria, Victoria was inspired by her mother and grandmother, who both ran restaurants, and she has translated her life-long passion for cooking into friendly, warming dishes that reflect her past.

As well as a thriving bar and restaurant, The Red Lion also offers a Business Lounge which is designed specifically to host a wide range of business events. The Business Lounge has everything needed to host a successful event including ample parking for delegates, large screen TV and free, reliable wi-fi.

Superfast fibre broadband is the toast of The Red Lion. The pub is connected to cabinet 1 on the Ombersley exchange, which was upgraded to superfast fibre by our programme. Victoria upgraded to superfast broadband in November 2016 and hasn’t looked back since.

Victoria said: “Since upgrading to superfast broadband we can update our website with ease to ensure that it’s up to date. We are also able to offer customers free wi-fi and we use social media to let people know about our Caribbean cuisine and other specialist menus. We also have a business lounge with free wi-fi which is proving popular all year round, something we would struggle to offer without a fast internet connection.”

Mobile phone coverage

Whilst Superfast Worcestershire is working to improve access to better broadband, we also get contacted by residents and businesses enquiring about improving mobile phone coverage, both for voice and data services. The following link (https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/) takes you to a page on the Ofcom website where you can check which mobile network operator provides the best coverage for your home or place of work. In Worcestershire, we are working to support Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership to understand mobile phone coverage and performance of the 2G, 3G and 4G networks in greater detail, as well as identifying what is needed to improve matters, addressing any issues with operators and planning for future technologies such as 5G.

Ofcom is running a research project to help them better understand how mobile networks perform across the UK, as well as how people use their mobile data services. Ofcom would like people to get involved by downloading their Mobile Research App. Anyone with an Android mobile phone can take part in the project. The app will work quietly in the background on your phone, automatically measuring the performance of any mobile and Wi-Fi networks that you use.
Superfast Worcestershire delivers Fibre to the Premises

Fibre broadband can be delivered in two ways: Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) and Fibre to the Premises (FTTP).

The majority of fibre deployment in Worcestershire is FTTC. FTTC uses fibre-optic cables throughout the network right up to the street cabinet. It then uses copper (or in some cases aluminium) wires to connect the cabinet to homes and businesses, offering download speeds up to 80Mbps.

The exact speed you get with FTTC depends on factors like the length of your line from the green roadside cabinet, the line quality and internal wiring within your premises.

FTTP on the other hand is a fibre-optic cable connection running from the telephone exchange directly to your home or business.

If you’re in an FTTP enabled area, you can benefit from download speeds of up to 1Gbps (and upload speeds of up to 220Mbps). However, not all service providers currently offer the service so you might not be informed by your Internet Service Provider that it is available and may need to consider changing providers. If you don’t need FTTP speeds you can still buy an FTTC product offering speeds up to 80Mbps.

As not every service provider offers their services over the FTTP network at the moment, it is important to investigate which suppliers can provide the service.

Areas where FTTP has been deployed to date include parts of Badsey, Hartlebury, Kidderminster, Worcester, Redditch, Ipsley, Cunlall Green, Droitwich, Bromsberrow (Hollybush) and Birtsmorton telephone exchange areas.

As we reach more technically challenging and geographically difficult areas more FTTP is planned off the following exchanges: Leigh Sinton, Bromsgrove, Hillside, Wythall, Hanley Swan, Knightwick, Malvern, Redditch, Stourport, Wychbold, Pebworth, Inkberrow, Hanbury, Droitwich, Wichenford, Upton upon Severn, Great Witley and Evesham. To find out if FTTP is available to you use the postcode checker on our website.
Keep your finger on the pulse with our interactive map

See at a glance which parts of Worcestershire have already been enabled for superfast fibre broadband, and check whether you can get it yet! Thousands of people across Worcestershire are now able to order the faster service. Our Interactive Map is a fantastic tool that is updated weekly and allows you to keep your finger on the pulse of our exciting programme.

Please help us spread the word and encourage friends and family in Worcestershire to register via our website.

www.superfastworcestershire.com

Do you have a story to share?

Do you have a story about how fibre broadband has helped transform your lifestyle or business for the better?

Share it with the Superfast Worcestershire team at: superfast@worcestershire.gov.uk

Thank you for registering your interest in the Superfast Worcestershire Broadband Programme. If you want to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please click here.

How to obtain a better service when superfast broadband isn’t available to you

Chancellor Philip Hammond recently announced in the Spring Budget an additional £200 million to support “full-fibre” broadband network projects.

The government has committed to extending superfast broadband to 95% of the UK by December 2017, as well as ensuring that everyone can access a service that provides at least 2Mbps. Coverage of superfast broadband will also continue to develop further beyond 2017.

Your local area may be covered, or be soon to be covered, by an existing commercial broadband programme or by Superfast Worcestershire. However, not all homes and businesses are currently scheduled to be covered by commercial or public roll-out plans, and communities which are not included in plans may want to consider developing their own solutions, such as community-led broadband schemes.

If you aren’t able to upgrade to superfast broadband and currently receive speeds of less than 2Mbps, and if you aren’t going to benefit from our £3.7 million expansion, please visit our website for more information on obtaining a better broadband service.

www.superfastworcestershire.co.uk

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Superfast Worcestershire is a partnership between

[Logos of BT, GROWTH DEALS, Department for Culture, Media & Sport, SUPERFAST BRITAIN, Worcestershire County Council]