

Better broadband for rural Teesdale under Project Gigabit

- GoFibre to build lightning-fast gigabit-capable connections more than twenty times faster than 'superfast'
- Made possible via Project Gigabit, the government's £5 billion plan to boost broadband across the UK

More than 4,000 rural premises in Teesdale will gain access to faster and more reliable broadband after a multi-million contract was awarded under the government's Project Gigabit scheme.

Borderlink, trading as GoFibre, will work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Durham County Council to enable thousands of hard-to-reach homes and businesses to access gigabit-capable broadband, made possible by £6.6m of DCMS investment.

The project will cover towns, villages and hamlets across the region including premises near to Barnard Castle and Bishop Auckland, subject to further survey completion.

Gigabit-capable networks are lightning-fast and fit for the future, allowing communities to upload and download data with none of the disruptions associated with ageing copper networks. More than 70 per cent of the UK can access gigabit connections – such as full fibre – but these are mostly in urban areas which is why the government is investing £5 billion to connect hard-to-reach areas that might otherwise miss out.

The contract with GoFibre's parent company Borderlink has been signed and planning is now underway, with construction due to begin in Spring 2023. This is the second Project Gigabit contract to be awarded following one covering North Dorset in August.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

Families and businesses across rural Teesdale can soon say goodbye to buffering broadband and hello to lightning-fast speeds thanks to the government leading the biggest broadband roll out in British history.

I'm delighted Teesdale will be one of the first places to benefit from the dozens of multi-million pound contracts we will be signing over the coming weeks and months to make sure people in 'hard-to-reach' areas across the UK get the broadband they deserve.

A GoFibre spokesperson, said:

Closing the digital divide and helping local communities to thrive by providing previously unimaginable levels of capability through high-quality broadband services is at the heart of everything we do. Through our latest appointment, we will work as a trusted partner, equipping Teesdale with world-class connectivity built for the future.

GoFibre is a Scottish independent broadband provider bringing full fibre broadband services to homes and businesses across Scotland and the north of England. This is the first contract Borderlink Broadband has been successfully awarded under Project Gigabit.

The fast, reliable networks delivered by Project Gigabit will level-up mostly rural and remote communities across the UK, as well as tackling pockets of poor connectivity in urban areas. Having the fastest connections also means the UK is fit for the future, with broadband infrastructure designed to deliver for people's needs for decades to come.

Cllr Susan McDonnell, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for digital, customer services and procurement, said:

We look forward to working on this exciting development, which will benefit thousands of our residents and businesses in rural areas.

Reliable broadband is integral to our ambitious plans for economic growth across County Durham. It plays a significant role in opening up a wider range of education and employment opportunities and helping communities to connect with each other and thrive.

Following a £164 million investment earlier this year from Gresham House's British Sustainable Infrastructure Fund, GoFibre is accelerating its rollout of full fibre broadband throughout Scotland and the north of England, enabling the company to transform more lives and address the UK's digital divide. GoFibre already has a presence across East Lothian, Fife and the Scottish Borders, with the aim to reach hundreds of thousands of homes over the next three years.

Households and businesses can register their interest in GoFibre's full fibre broadband services by visiting www.gofibre.co.uk/register.

–ENDS–

Notes to Editors

- Project Gigabit is DCMS's flagship £5 billion programme to enable hard-to-reach communities to access lightning-fast gigabit-capable broadband.
- The Teesdale contract assigns around £6.6m of UK government funding to build a gigabit-capable broadband network to more than 4,000 local premises, subject to survey completion.
- GoFibre, trading under parent company Borderlink Broadband, secured an

investment of £164 million in early 2022 from the British Sustainable Infrastructure fund, managed by Gresham House PLC, to accelerate its rollout of full fibre broadband throughout Scotland and the North of England, enabling the company to transform more lives and help to address the UK's digital divide.

- Founded by CEO, Alex Cacciamani, and his wife, Laura, in their hometown of Duns, GoFibre was created out of the need to solve their broadband problems at home. After moving to the Scottish Borders in 2017 with their three kids, they realised quickly there was a need for faster broadband in these rural areas and set about solving the issue.
- The company is headquartered in Edinburgh, with an engineering depot in Berwick-Upon-Tweed.
- With GoFibre, customers can access speeds of between 100Mbps and 10Gbps, with standard pricing starting at £36 per month.
- Individuals and businesses can find out more and register their interest in full fibre broadband by visiting <http://www.gofibre.co.uk/get-in-touch/>