

Next steps to further extend fast broadband in Wales

Since Superfast Cymru began in 2013, the availability of superfast broadband across Wales has more than doubled thanks directly to this project and investment

The latest Ofcom report (December 2017) shows that Wales now has the highest availability of superfast broadband over 30Mbps amongst the devolved nations despite the challenges of the country's topography.

A thorough testing and verification process is currently under way on the latest data presented by Openreach with the aim of announcing the project's final figures in the spring.

The new measures, backed by funding of £80m, include a new rollout scheme currently out to tender which encourages rural delivery, business prioritisation and ultrafast 100Mbps services.

Under the scheme solutions will be encouraged in areas suffering the lowest download speeds along with lower 4G mobile data coverage. It will include safeguards to ensure communities are kept up to date as far as possible on whether they will be included.

Also included in the new measures are a review and continuation of the current voucher schemes for those without access to superfast broadband and ongoing work to develop a parallel community focussed scheme. A dedicated broadband outreach team will work with clusters of homes or businesses to procure a solution.

Finally, Openreach will also work an additional two months under the current agreement to connect 2,500 premises at no extra cost to the Welsh Government.

In addition, Openreach has been invited to provide details of structures built but not completed, and the Welsh Government will look at how these can be completed under the existing grant agreement.

Julie James said:

“Through Superfast Cymru we have fundamentally altered the broadband landscape in Wales, bringing superfast broadband to areas of Wales that simply would not have been connected.

“We must not lose sight of the significant achievement that this large scale engineering project represents. Homes and businesses the length and breadth of Wales are now enjoying the benefits of this investment and accessing digital services.

“Despite the success of Superfast Cymru in transforming broadband connectivity across Wales, there is clearly more work to be done and this Government is committed to taking further action.

“The suite of measures I am announcing today, when taken together, will help us to realise the ambition described in Taking Wales Forward to bring people together digitally by offering fast reliable broadband to every property in Wales.

“Together, the successor scheme, the community scheme and our voucher schemes will provide a comprehensive package of interventions that will help us meet the challenges ahead.”