

## Rural areas in Cornwall set for £36 million broadband boost

- 19,000 rural homes and businesses in line for a speedy connection via government's Project Gigabit scheme
- Comes as it is revealed more than 100 schools, GP surgeries, community centres and other public buildings across South West city of Plymouth have been plugged into lightning-fast broadband

Thousands of people in rural parts of Cornwall are a step closer to getting lightning-fast broadband under the government's historic £5 billion Project Gigabit.

Broadband companies have been invited to bid for £36 million worth of contracts to bring fast connections to 19,000 homes and businesses in many of the hard-to-reach areas of Cornwall. Work will commence on getting the infrastructure rolled out across the region – including rural communities in Land's End and the Lizard Peninsula – from October this year.

Project Gigabit is the biggest government-funded broadband roll out ever seen in the UK and is focused on connecting hard-to-reach communities unlikely to be connected through commercial rollout.

In a further broadband boost for the South West, the government announced dozens of public buildings in Plymouth – including doctor's surgeries, schools and libraries – have been connected to high-speed broadband thanks to a £164 million government scheme to level up public services, which has connected more than 5,000 buildings across the UK.

The 123 upgrades will drive up productivity in public services, create better experiences for people who use them and encourage broadband companies to easily extend the network to thousands of surrounding homes and businesses which will boost the government's national mission to grow the economy and create new jobs.

It means doctors and police officers will save time waiting for large files such as x-rays and CCTV footage to download, teachers can make better use of digital technologies to bring their lessons to life and care home residents can get better access to online services for improving health and wellbeing.

Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

“Fast and reliable broadband is vital to households, businesses and the public services we rely on every day. That's why, on top of our transformative £5 billion Project Gigabit investment to improve rural connectivity, we have upgraded thousands of schools, libraries and hospitals across the UK to first class broadband fit for the future.”

Many areas in Cornwall are already plugged into top quality connectivity thanks to government investment. 95 percent of premises can access superfast

speeds – more than enough to cover most people’s connectivity needs today – which is thanks in part to government investment in the region and measures to bust barriers holding back roll out.

On top of the new procurements launched, today’s progress update on Project Gigabit reveals that over 100,000 vouchers worth more than £185 million have now been issued to ensure rural areas can access the same lightning-fast broadband available in more urban areas. More than 1,000 premises across hard-to-reach areas in Cornwall are in line for connections thanks to £2.3 million funding through this scheme, and 380 have already been connected.

ENDS

## **Notes to editors**

### **Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme**

The move to connect public buildings is part of the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme which was launched five years ago to subsidise the cost of full fibre broadband connections in publicly-owned buildings.

It has delivered 2,700 kilometres of lightning-fast full fibre across the UK – more than five times the distance between London and Edinburgh – which includes upgrades to:

- 1,262 schools and colleges
- 348 libraries
- 53 hospitals
- 658 health centres including GP surgeries
- 627 council-owned offices
- 222 community centres
- 155 leisure centres
- 201 fire and ambulance stations.

Full fibre connections provide speeds in excess of 1,000 megabits per second which will give vital public services the speed and reliability needed to operate at their full potential for decades to come.

The upgrades are in locations in many different parts of the UK.

### **Project Gigabit**

Project Gigabit is the government’s flagship £5 billion programme to connect hard-to-reach communities unlikely to be connected through commercial rollout, meaning families no longer having to battle over bandwidth and people in rural areas can have the freedom to live and work more flexibly, helping businesses to grow and vital public services to thrive..

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The faster connections delivered by the scheme have been levelling up rural communities across the UK: enabling businesses to grow by using digital technology to boost their productivity and giving people living in more remote areas better access to good jobs.

The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) is an initiative under Project Gigabit offering rural homes and businesses up to £1,500 or £3,500 towards the cost of a gigabit-capable broadband connection. The value can be much higher in many areas thanks to top-up funding from local authorities.