Water pipes in Yorkshire to deliver high-speed broadband in new trial

- Plans to test deploying full fibre broadband safely via drinking water mains launched
- Pipes between Barnsley and Penistone to be used in trial with potential to connect up to 8,500 homes and businesses to faster broadband
- Technology will also power new 5G masts to connect people in hard-to-reach areas

Fast broadband will run through water pipes in parts of South Yorkshire as part of plans to get better internet access to people quicker.

New proposals to accelerate the rollout of broadband without digging up roads would see fibre-optic cables deployed through 17 kilometres of live drinking water mains between Barnsley and Penistone in the government technology trial.

Broadband companies could then tap into the network to deliver gigabit-capable connections to an estimated 8,500 homes and businesses along the route, helping to level up hard-to-reach communities.

Civil works, in particular installing new ducts and poles, can make up as much as four fifths of the costs to industry of building new gigabit-capable broadband networks. The Fibre in Water scheme will demonstrate what could be a greener, quicker and more cost-effective way of connecting fibre optic cables to homes, businesses and mobile masts, without the disruption caused by digging up roads and land.

The network will also be used to set up 5G masts to bring fast and reliable wireless broadband to hard-to-reach communities where wired solutions are too expensive to deliver commercially. The first trial of its kind in the UK, it will also explore how fibre can help the water industry detect leaks, operate more efficiently and lower the carbon cost of drinking water.

The trials will last for up to two years and, if successful, the technology could be operational in networks from 2024 onwards.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

“ Digging up roads and land is one of the biggest obstacles to rolling out faster broadband, so we’re exploring how we can make use of the existing water network to accelerate deployment and help detect and minimise water leaks.

“ We’re committed to getting homes and businesses across the country connected to better broadband and this cutting-edge project is an exciting example of the bold measures this government is leading on to level up communities with the very best digital connectivity.”

The first phase of the project launching today will focus on the legal and safety aspects of this innovative solution, and ensure that combining clean water and telecoms services in a single pipeline is safe, secure and commercially viable before any technology is actually installed.

If successful, the project could be replicated in other parts of the country and could turbocharge the government's £5 billion Project Gigabit – the biggest broadband roll out in British history funding top-of-the-range gigabit connections for millions of rural homes and businesses that would otherwise be left out of commercial deployment due to the higher costs of connection. Yorkshire and Lincolnshire have more than 300,000 rural homes and businesses in line for an upgrade, including 56,800 premises in South Yorkshire.

Gigabit-capable broadband coverage has rocketed in the UK from less than 6 per cent in 2019 to more than 66 per cent following government measures to stimulate commercial investment from broadband companies and bust barriers to roll out. In the UK 20 per cent of water put into public supply is wasted due to leaks every day. With current technology, it can be difficult for water companies to quickly identify the exact location of a leak and carry out a repair.

This project, delivered by Yorkshire Water working with Arcadis and University of Strathclyde will test solutions that reduce water leaks by putting fibre sensors in the pipes which allow water companies to improve the speed and accuracy with which they can identify a leak and repair it, often before it causes a problem for consumers. Water companies have committed to delivering a 50% reduction in leakage, and this project could help to reach that goal.

The technology being deployed during the trials has been approved by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). The DWI requires rigorous testing ahead of approving any products and the processes that introduce them into drinking water pipes, and fibre has already been deployed in water pipes in other countries such as Spain.

Sam Bright, Innovation Programme Manager at Yorkshire Water said:

" We are very pleased that the Government is supporting the development of the Fibre in Water solution which can reduce the environmental impact and day-to-day disruptions that can be caused by both water and telecoms companies' activities.

" The technology for fibre in water has significantly progressed in recent years and this project will now enable us to fully develop its potential to help improve access to better broadband in hard-to-reach areas and further reduce leakage on our networks."

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The government has allocated £1.2 million to the winning consortium to

proceed with the design stage of the project. The remaining £2 million funds will be granted once this stage has been reviewed.
- It comes from HM Treasury's Shared Outcomes Fund which is used to fund pilot projects to test innovative ways of working across the public sector.
- The project is led by Yorkshire Water, with Arcadis and University of Strathclyde. Additional partners will be announced shortly.

The Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner's response to the College of Policing APP on Live Facial Recognition

News story

Professor Fraser Sampson reflects on the publication of the CoP APP on Live Facial Recognition.

Whether it's in our streets, supermarkets or (heaven forfend) our schools, how to deal with Live Facial Recognition (LFR) is the surveillance question that won't go away.

I was therefore pleased to see the publication of the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice on Live Facial Recognition which sets out a commitment to 'lawful and ethical' use of this technology. Being guided by lawful and ethical considerations will be critical if we are to address, for example, the horrifying prospect of state-owned surveillance companies supplying our police and schools with the facial recognition technology that they're using to perpetuate genocide and human rights atrocities in other parts of the world.

I do however have some concerns and questions about the published APP. For

example:

1. The apparent intention to use LFR technology to find ‘potential witnesses’ is not the digital equivalent of placing a triangle board on the street to ask anyone passing if they saw anything at a given time and date which they’d like to share with the police. Generally speaking a police witness is someone who has indicated their willingness to take part in the criminal justice process – in which case you don’t need a camera to identify them for you; you already know who they are (and, if you don’t, why would you have a ‘library’ image of them to compare against a crowd when searching for them?). If this envisages tracking people and approaching them to confirm whether they were at a certain place on that date and then ‘inviting’ them to disclose what they heard and saw solely because someone’s surveillance system thinks they were present, that’s a new and somewhat sinister development which potentially treats everyone like walk-on extras on a police film set rather than as individual citizens free to travel, meet and talk. I think the speculative use of LFR in this way would call its legitimacy and proportionality into question. I can understand that there may be some exceptional, very high harm events such as terrorist attacks or natural disasters where retrospective facial recognition might legitimately make a significant contribution to an understanding of what happened, but those events would be mercifully rare and wholly exceptional. Making effective provision for exceptional events calls for very careful drafting if the exception to the rule is not to become a catch-all boilerplate clause covering every unspecified eventuality.

2. The terminology and definitions of different types of biometric and forensic search methods raise further questions. For example, LFR and Retrospective Facial Recognition invite questions about the relevant training, certification and accreditation standards. What is the fundamental difference between an LFR search, a mass screening and a forensic database search? Are these to be clarified with the new Forensic Science Regulator? This goes beyond a glossary and is important in public understanding of the APP and its wider implications.

3. Representative testing methodologies for example the ‘Blue Watchlist’. A major and enduring challenge for British policing is the fact that minority ethnic populations continue to be under-represented in policing in light of which using existing personnel to test the LFR system already runs the risk of introducing imbalance and an increased risk of demographic differentials, not just in the software development but also in the human adjudication process.

4. LFR and counter terrorism – while not mentioned specifically, the alignment between LFR with the principles and standards set out in the UN Compendium needs to be clarified. Jean Charles de Menezes was tragically shot dead by CT police in London because he had been facially

misidentified by a surveillance officer. If we were to rely on LFR in these extreme circumstances in the future what are the safeguards? Is there a case for judicial approval for deploying LFR rather than a senior police officer as is the case for other types of surveillance? What about the exchange of image templates from LFR across jurisdictions, for example, where the technology is used for journeys via the channel tunnel? Perhaps the DCMS consultation on the structure for biometric surveillance oversight and regulation should address this.

5. The focus of the APP is data-rights driven whereas the overall direction in police surveillance, coupled with the acute public sensitivity to some technology, extends far beyond keeping data safe. Rather than treating this area as purely a matter for 'data rights' compliance the framework for maintaining public trust and confidence in police surveillance should focus more on the much wider impact on society. For example, the 'chilling effect' of biometric surveillance by the police has been well documented both in academic research and in the courts – if people decide not to travel, not to meet, not even to talk openly because of their concerns that where they go, what they do and say is being monitored by the police, that is a fundamental constitutional consequence of intrusive policing activity; and it has nothing to do with data protection. Perhaps the DCMS consultation should address this too.

In summary – in moving from a standard police operating model of humans looking for other humans in a crowd to the automated industrialised process of LFR (as some have characterised it, a move from line fishing to deep ocean trawling), how commonplace will it become to be stopped in our cities, transport hubs, outside arenas or school grounds and required to prove our identity? The ramifications for our constitutional freedoms in that future are profound. Is the status of the UK citizen shifting from our jealously guarded presumption of innocence to that of 'suspected until we have proved our identity to the satisfaction of the examining officer'? If so, that will require more than an APP from the College of Policing: it will require parliamentary debate.

I am keen to continue open, informed dialogue with stakeholders who have an interest in this area, from the avid supporters to the anti-surveillance campaigners and everyone in between. The proper role of technology in surveillance calls for balance, not only of what's possible against what's lawful, but increasingly alongside what we find acceptable or even tolerable. Societal acceptability is the ground where the accountable, ethical and legitimate use of surveillance technology is being shaped. That again is surely a matter for parliament.

To achieve a greater understanding of the societal acceptability of facial recognition technology by the police, my office is planning to put 'Facial Recognition on Trial'. In conjunction with Professor William Webster (Centre for Research into Information, Surveillance and Privacy) the event will contribute to a key objective under the Civil Engagement strand of the

National Surveillance Camera Strategy. The event will take place before a live audience and will imitate a court trial with evidence provided by expert witnesses and members of the public acting as a jury. The mock trial will be held on 14 June at the London School of Economics with tickets available to book soon.

My website will continue to be updated as further details emerge.

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Fee removed for No Time Limit applications

News story

From today it will be free for those with indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK to make a No Time Limit application.

From today (6 April 2022) it will be free for those with indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK to make a No Time Limit application, the Home Office has announced.

A No Time Limit application allows those who have old-style immigration documents or those who have lost them to upgrade to a biometric residence permit (BRP) which can be used to confirm their existing UK immigration status.

The cost of making a No Time Limit application was £248.20, which included a £229 application fee and a £19.20 biometric enrolment fee.

Holders of a BRP can also prove their right to work in the UK and right to rent in England using free online services. The document will also facilitate straightforward travel in and out of the UK.

Minister for Safe and Legal Migration, Kevin Foster said:

> This is another example of how the UK's immigration system is improving and moving to a fully end-to-end digital experience for the individual.
>
> Over time, this means we will increasingly replace physical and paper-based products and services with accessible, easy to use online services. Allowing those with indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK to upgrade their legacy immigration document to a biometric residence permit free of charge will help them navigate this transition.
>
> We would encourage those who qualify to apply. The BRP has enhanced security features which means there is less chance of it being used fraudulently by another person, and it can provide you with peace of mind in terms of your immigration status and rights.

Individuals with indefinite leave to enter or remain can make a No Time Limit application to have their existing UK immigration status confirmed on a BRP if:

- they have an old-style immigration document
- their document containing their status or endorsement has been lost, stolen or has expired
- they do not have any documentary evidence confirming they have indefinite leave to enter or remain
- they need to amend the details on their evidence of status, for example the name on their immigration document

Applications for No Time Limit must be made in the UK on Gov.uk. The Home Office will ensure that support is available for those unable to use online services.

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Civil/crime news: digital go-live for subject access requests

News story

Requests for personal information can be made through new digital service.

A new digital service allowing individuals to request personal information is now available which aims to improve the user experience for subject access requests (SARs).

The process allows individuals to request information held by the Legal Aid Agency and other parts of the Ministry of Justice.

The service is open to all solicitors and members of the public who wish to request personal information.

Digital service trial

A pilot for the new service was run towards the end of 2021 with a small group, which included legal aid practitioners.

The pilot was run by the Ministry of Justice, which manages the SAR process. During the pilot:

- improvements were made to the efficiency of the process – requests made through the digital form were accepted as valid 81% of the time
- two-thirds of solicitors surveyed said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the new request process
- responding to feedback, online content explaining the service was updated to make it clearer for everyone

How do we find the service?

Request personal information– to access the digital service

Published 6 April 2022

UK imposes sweeping new sanctions to starve Putin's war machine

- Full asset freeze on largest Russian bank and end to all new UK outward investment into Russia announced
- UK to end all imports of Russian coal and oil by end of 2022 and take action against oligarchs and key strategic industries
- Foreign Secretary will urge G7 colleagues to maintain the momentum on further waves of sanctions at meeting tomorrow

Following further reports of abhorrent attacks on civilians in Ukraine this week, the Foreign Secretary has today (Wednesday 6 April) announced a significant ratcheting up of UK sanctions on Russia.

As a leading voice calling for international action, the UK's fifth package of measures will cut off key sectors of the Russian economy and end our dependency on Russian energy. Today's measures have been delivered in lockstep with our global allies as the EU has also banned imports of Russian coal and the US has sanctioned SberBank.

Announcing the package, the Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

> Today, we are stepping up our campaign to bring Putin's appalling war to an end with some of our toughest sanctions yet.
>
> Our latest wave of measures will bring an end to the UK's imports of Russian energy and sanction yet more individuals and businesses, decimating Putin's war machine.
>
> Together with our allies, we are showing the Russian elite that they cannot wash their hands of the atrocities committed on Putin's orders. We will not rest until Ukraine prevails.

Key sanctions announced today include:

- Asset freezes against Sberbank and Credit Bank of Moscow. Sberbank is Russia's largest bank and this freeze is being taken in co-ordination with the US.

- An outright ban on all new outward investment to Russia. In 2020 UK investment in Russia was worth over £11bn. This will be another major hit to the Russian economy and further limit their future capabilities.

- By the end of 2022, the UK will end all dependency on Russian coal and oil, and end imports of gas as soon as possible thereafter. From next week, the export of key oil refining equipment and catalysts will also be banned, degrading Russia's ability to produce and export oil –

targeting not only the industry’s finances but its capabilities as a whole.

- Action against key Russian strategic industries and state owned enterprises. This includes a ban on imports of iron and steel products, a key source of revenue. Russia’s military ambitions are also being thwarted by new restrictions on its ability to acquire the UK’s world-renowned quantum and advanced material technologies.

- And targeting a further eight oligarchs active in these industries, which Putin uses to prop up his war economy.

They include:

- Viatcheslav (Moshe) Kantor, the largest shareholder of fertilizer company Acron with vital strategic significance for the Russian government
- Andrey Guryev – known close associate of Vladimir Putin and founder of PhosAgro – a vital strategic company that produces fertilizers.
- Sergey Kogogin, director of Kamaz – manufacturer of trucks and buses, including for the Russian military.
- Sergey Sergeyevich Ivanov, President of the world’s largest diamond producer Alrosa, which the UK also sanctioned.
- Leonid Mikhelson, the founder, and CEO of leading Russian natural gas producer Novatek, with a net worth of £18bn.
- Andrey Akimov, the CEO of Russia’s third largest bank Gazprombank.
- Aleksander Dyukov, the CEO of Russia’s third largest and majority state-owned oil producer GazpromNeft.
- Boris Borisovich Rotenberg, son of the co-owner of Russia’s largest gas pipeline producer SGM. The Rotenberg family are known for their close connections to Putin and a number of them have already been sanctioned.

At tomorrow’s meeting of G7 Foreign Ministers the Foreign Secretary will call for further collective action, including an accelerated timetable for all G7 countries to end their dependency on Russian energy.

She will also call for continued G7 unity in imposing further co-ordinated waves of sanctions against the Russian economy and elites around Putin, until Russia withdraws its troops and ends its brutal campaign of aggression against Ukraine once and for all.

Asset freeze

An asset freeze prevents anyone in the UK, or any UK national or registered company anywhere in the world, from dealing with any funds or economic resources which are owned, held or controlled by the designated person. It will also prevent funds or economic resources being provided to or for the benefit of the designated person.

Travel ban

A travel ban means that the designated person must be refused leave to enter

or to remain in the United Kingdom, providing the individual to be an excluded person under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971.

Transport sanctions

Recently introduced powers make it a criminal offence for any Russian aircraft to fly or land in the UK, and give the government powers to remove aircraft belonging to designated Russian individuals and entities from the UK aircraft register, even if the sanctioned individual is not on board. Russian ships are also banned from UK ports.