

Connecting Devon and Somerset Update

Voucher Scheme

The CDS Broadband Voucher Scheme, which provides anyone with a broadband speed of less than 2 Mbps with a voucher for £500 towards the cost of a new broadband connection, has received in excess of 3,900 applications. Of these over 2,700 have been approved and over 300 installations have already been completed. 18 suppliers have joined the scheme and are offering solutions such as 4G, fixed wireless and satellite to bring residents at least 10Mbps and in many cases much faster speeds.

The CDS voucher scheme will close on 30th November to new applications. This will allow suppliers to complete installations and return invoices to CDS by the end of the financial year in March 2017.

Residents and businesses who have slower speeds can apply through the Connecting Devon and Somerset website. Those with speeds that are confirmed as below the 2Mbps threshold and have no access to faster networks will be issued with a voucher. In some cases where there is a programme underway to connect an area the applicant will be informed that they may be able to access improved broadband through another scheme. If residents do not have sufficient internet access to apply online, paper copies of the application form can be sent. Alternatively arrangements can be made to take applications over the phone.

Further details can be found on the CDS website at:

www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/cds-broadband-voucher-scheme/

Phase 2 Procurement

In July Connecting Devon and Somerset partnership (CDS) issued its open tender to extend the superfast broadband scheme in phase two. £39.5m of public sector investment will deliver Next Generation Access broadband services (a minimum of 30 Mbps) and ultrafast broadband (of speeds greater than 100 Mbps) to tens of thousands of homes and businesses across Devon and Somerset in predominantly rural areas.

CDS is evaluating tenders from bidding suppliers for this second phase and aims to have secured contracted partner(s) by December. Works on phase two can then begin in the New Year connecting more premises across Devon and Somerset.

The phase two intervention area is comprised of premises that have received no superfast Next Generation Access under phase one, are outside of central urban areas that CDS are encouraging to be served by the market, and have not been identified in the Open Market Review as part of a private commercial rollout. The tax-payer subsidised CDS programme has focused phase two on rural areas and as such provided contractual incentive to suppliers to deliver step changes in speeds; benefitting those who need it most.

National Parks

The phase two National Parks programme is already underway in our most difficult to reach areas of Dartmoor and Exmoor. CDS aims to deliver connections to around 5,800 premises across the moors, boosting the rural economy.

Airband Community Ltd, the wireless broadband contractor for Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, have connected up most of the network ring on Dartmoor and are installing the first sites on Exmoor. Presently over 1000 properties on Dartmoor and some more on Exmoor can connect to the fixed wireless network. Postcards are being sent out to properties who can receive a service and residents on the moors can find more information on the CDS website as well as registering for updates on wholesale.airband.co

The CDS team

www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk