

Options for those currently not included in the Superfast Worcestershire deployment plan

Since 2013, Worcestershire County Council, through its Superfast Broadband partnerships with BT, BDUK & Worcester Local Enterprise Partnership; have extended the availability of faster broadband to over 90% of Worcestershire premises and we're going further! By autumn 2017 94% of premises will be able to access 'superfast' speeds.

We are aware that despite significant investment some areas of Worcestershire aren't currently included in the Superfast Worcestershire rollout plans ; therefore, we have put together the following guide, to alternative solutions, potentially outlining options to obtaining a better service.

1. The first thing to do is to **check whether fibre is actually available in your area**. You can do this by entering your landline telephone number or postcode into the checker on our website at www.superfastworcestershire.com or using BT's DSL Checker at www.dslchecker.bt.com.

If fibre broadband is available, you will need to check your current broadband contract and either upgrade with your current provider (an option for people who have weeks or months left on their current contracts), or switch broadband to a different provider of their choice. Please remember to do your research and place the order with your chosen provider.

If you would like more information on whether fibre roll out will be coming to you via the Superfast Worcestershire partnership please check the cabinet status page at www.superfastworcestershire.com/cabinet-status (please note, you will need to know your exchange area and cabinet number, both can be found by checking how you are connected to the network via the above checkers). If still unsure, please don't hesitate to contact us at superfast@worcestershire.gov.uk.

2. If you are some distance from the upgraded cabinet then you may achieve better, but not 'superfast' speeds. This is because the broadband signal degrades rapidly over a copper connection. If this is the case, you may consider BT's **Unlimited Faster Broadband** product: <http://tinyurl.com/km55s4z>, which should be offered to any BT customer who calls to order fibre, but though connected to a fibre enabled cabinet is too far away to be able to receive 'BT Infinity'. Typically, a customer may order it, if it offers a usable increase in download speeds. Please note other providers e.g. SKY may offer similar products.

3. If you aren't covered under Superfast Worcestershire's current or upcoming plans, you may want to consider alternative internet service providers (ISPs) operating in Worcestershire, and providing their own infrastructure on a commercial basis. Suppliers like **BT** (www.communityfibre.bt.com), **Virgin Media** (<http://tinyurl.com/pk4cm3j>) and **Gigaclear** (www.gigaclear.com/) continue with their national demand led campaigns.

BT's 'Community Fibre Partnerships' encourages communities to work with them to 'part-fund' a solution, which could be made up of any of the following solutions e.g. Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC), Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) and network re-arrangement, including new fibre cabinets to deal with long lines or exchange only lines and Fibre to the Remote Node (FTTRN), which, simply put is like a 'small cabinet' on a pole or in the ground, much closer to properties.

Virgin's 'Supercharging Local Communities' and 'Cable My Street' are calling upon residents and businesses to influence the decision on where they deploy next by registering demand on their website. To date, **Virgin** announced their intention to extend their network to: **Lickey, Catshill** and **Upper and Lower Marlbook** as part of Virgin Media's Project Lightning rollout.

Gigaclear's commercial model is 100% fibre to the premise (FTTP) and is demand led i.e. the opportunity is promoted within the community and if demand is present fibre to the premises is deployed. Gigaclear's currently proposed deployment is expected to focus on the south parts of the Malvern Hills District (East and South from Malvern), East & West parts of the Bromsgrove district (around Alvechurch and Rowney

Green in the East and Dodford - West) as well as around Rushock and Upton Warren on (North of Wychavon and South of Wyre Forest districts).

It is also worth investigating whether a wireless provider can provide coverage, e.g. Worcester based **Airband** (<https://home.airband.co/>), or if they could extend coverage into your area. Airband are already covering large parts of Worcestershire, e.g. 14 rural Parishes (Little Witley, Bockleton, Kyre, Hanley, Rochford, Eastham, Lindridge, Mamble, Bayton, Tibberton, Crowle, part of Hanbury, Stock and Bradley and Feckenham), delivered as part of Worcestershire County Council's Community Pathfinder Project. **Martley Web Mesh** (www.facebook.com/martley.web.mesh/) is another locally based wireless provider.

4. Ethernet / Leased (private) lines for Businesses - are private fibre connections often requested for businesses, without access to the FTTC or FTTP networks. Occasionally, businesses choose Ethernet / Lease lines due to their business / service requirements.

5. 'Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme' www.superfastworcestershire.com/better-broadband-scheme run by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) is another alternative for those not in the current deployment plan and with speeds **below 2Mbps**. The scheme provides eligible households with a voucher worth approximately £350 towards the initial installation and equipment costs. Please note, satellite packages come with a limited monthly usage allowance.

It is also worth noting that subsidy payments can be grouped together with other residents/businesses in your community, to explore and pursue e.g. a Community Fibre Partnership option with BT. An example of how this has been done elsewhere can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/zw73xkb>.

6. Other alternative solutions for those that can't get an adequate broadband service delivered via a phone line, could be **mobile broadband**, which is increasingly becoming a viable option. This doesn't need you to connect a computer to a mobile phone. You will be given a 'plug in device' known as a "Dongle" which you plug into your computer.

Depending on your location, the mobile provider should confirm your potential connection speed, as this technology works on mobile phone signals. You can also check how strong your signal should be (inside and outside) by visiting the OFCOM Mobile coverage and fixed broadband checker at <http://maps.ofcom.org.uk/check-coverage/>. It is worth noting that mobile packages often come with a limited usage allowance.

7. A community could look to develop and fund their own fibre or wireless based initiatives, through options such as Community Shares - Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) / Community Share Companies or Self build like arrangements such as B4RN <http://b4rn.org.uk/> - who also raised money through community shares. Other examples include Alston Moor www.cybermoor.org and Herefordshire Community Networks <http://www.hereford-cic.net/>.

In addition to the above options, Superfast Worcestershire continues its drive to cover as much of Worcestershire with fibre based broadband as possible. To achieve that, we are deploying an increasing number of FTTP, FTTRN and re-engineered structures. The potential '**reinvestment**' into broadband (up to £3.25m), has also already been approved by Full Council, to take coverage beyond the projected 94% superfast coverage of Worcestershire by autumn 2017. At the time of writing, we are in the process of investigating how re-investment could be best utilised and what the potential timescales are to extend the scope of the current plans. The outcome of these discussions will be publicised in due course. The programme team is also currently investigating (subject to a full application being accepted) opportunities for a new procurement (c. £2m) to further extend the coverage, focussing on businesses. More details about this opportunity will also be shared as further details are known.

Lastly, our short 'Not In the Plan Survey' remains open and we are asking communities, not scheduled to benefit from Superfast Broadband under the current programmes, to complete it www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=144959149352 and share it with others in their communities.

