

## Connecting Devon and Somerset - update on Superfast Extension Programme

### Superfast Extension Programme update

By the beginning of February, the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) partnership will issue its tender for potential delivery partners, to extend superfast broadband coverage as far as possible in Devon and Somerset with the aim of getting to 100%.

Overcoming significant challenges due to flooding and the weather, CDS has made huge progress in connecting people and businesses to superfast broadband over the last year, upgrading over 424 cabinets and connecting nearly 100,000 premises to the fibre network. The CDS Programme remains on target to reach 90% of premises by 2016. As you may have seen in the local media, there are now many success stories from businesses and communities benefiting from a new broadband connection provided by CDS.

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) partnership (Devon and Somerset County Councils together with Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay Councils) raised the highest amount of funding of any public broadband programme in the UK, achieving over £38 million when combined with Government matched-funding from BDUK.

This next stage of the CDS programme will also include funding from the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, which will dedicate investment to connect businesses in the area to superfast broadband. It is predicted that the CDS programme will bring an economic boost to the region of around three-quarters of a billion pounds and business connections are essential to this.

### Details of tender

Building on the success of the programme so far, the CDS Board has agreed to use the BDUK national framework for the majority of the area in line with the recommended Government approach. However, as previously indicated we also want to open up this second stage to other potential providers. To meet this aim, we have decided to run an open procurement process in the Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks. This will mean that within these areas any providers can bid for this work.

The National Parks present some of the most challenging terrain for connecting remote rural communities to superfast broadband. Two areas in Exmoor are already being connected with the help of CDS by a Yeovil-based firm, using a combination of satellite and wifi technology. With this open tender process we expect to see more use of innovative technologies.

### Public consultation process

This week we will be launching our consultation on the data we gathered through our Open Market Review. This will allow commercial providers (such as BT and Virgin) to confirm details of where they are already rolling out broadband. This consultation is done in public and will be announced on our web site. Once complete, we will know where State Aid can be used to fund wholesale superfast broadband infrastructure across Devon and Somerset.

### Find out more

If you would like to discuss the procurement process or anything else about the programme, please contact Sofie Francis in Devon County Council's Economy and Enterprise team on 01392 382657 or [sofie.francis@devon.gov.uk](mailto:sofie.francis@devon.gov.uk).