

JESSE'S

BROADBAND

DECEMBER

UPDATE

AT LAST WE CAN MAKE PROGRESS

George Osborne's announcement that Herefordshire had been awarded one of just four Superfast Broadband Pilots has delighted local MP Jesse Norman. "I am absolutely thrilled at the news. This concludes the first phase of a sustained three-year campaign, in collaboration with Herefordshire Council, to promote broadband."

"This has long been the Forgotten County. I said at the General Election that my goal was to try to get a fair deal for Herefordshire, and this is an early step towards that goal. It really shows that the Coalition government takes rural areas seriously."

The chancellor himself said: "It will help encourage the growth of our creative industries as a key part of the new economy we are seeking to build."

Team Work was the key

"This win," stressed Jesse, "is the result of a lot of hard work by Councillors, Council Officers, Advantage West Midlands and my own team. I would particularly like to pay tribute to the bid team, including Alan Ronald, Natalia Silver, Andrew Abraham, Clem Attwood and Phil Wells. They have all done a terrific job."

"I am also really pleased that a group of passionate Herefordians has started *FastBroadband4Herefordshire* (FB4H) to support all those communities and businesses across the county interested in broadband."

£5 Million Project

The project is being overseen nationally by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), a government organisation tasked with delivering broadband access to the whole of the UK by 2012, and high-speed broadband to the majority of the country by 2017.

Natalia Silver and Alan Ronald from Herefordshire Council will lead the project

locally. So far BDUK has not finalised exact details of how the scheme will work or if additional European funds will be available. The pilot will, however, also give access to a £530 million fund set aside to support broadband in places where it is not financially viable.

Early indications are that the pilot could have a community element. Providers may be asked to install fibre-optic connections to as many centres as possible in the pilot area (See provisional map on page 2) and local network providers and community organisations then enabled to undertake the local distribution of the broadband connection by wireless or fibre to homes in their community. It is understood that main providers will be selected via EU wide competition.

The rest of the county

Herefordshire Council is exploring a range of options for extending the fibre optic and other networks to the rest of the county.

Meanwhile it would be hugely helpful if every village and town conducted its own survey to get a measure of the likely residential and business demand. If you would like to do a survey either contact your Herefordshire Councillor or visit www.fastbroadband4herefordshire.org.uk. FB4H will provide a questionnaire personalised to your community and will analyse the data you collect.



February 11 Broadband Summit 2

Please put Friday, 11 February, 2011 in your diary.

Jesse will be chairing the next Broadband Summit. Doors open at The Hereford Suite, Three Counties Hotel at 08.30 for Coffee & Registration. Broadband Summit 2 will start at 09.30

It is being organised by the FastBroadband4Herefordshire team working with Jesse's Hereford and Westminster offices.

The agenda will be published later in December and is likely to include:

- Updates from local groups that have undertaken surveys or spoken to suppliers
- How to set up a Community Broadband Network
- Q&A on risks and rewards of setting up a community broadband company
- Briefing by BDUK and Herefordshire Council on the Pilot Programme
- Case histories on benefits of broadband for health, education and rural business

If you have a particular topic that you would like included please call David Sheppard on 01989 750923.

If you received this update directly you will receive a programme and booking form for Broadband Summit2. If this has been forwarded to you please register your interest at: www.fastbroadband4herefordshire.org.uk/Summit2

MORE

Making a case for Fast Broadband



While most of Britain will soon have access to world class superfast telecoms, we in Herefordshire are struggling to cross the starting line.

Some Herefordians may feel that the broadband service they currently use is adequate and that providing something better is unnecessary. But it is worth remembering that fast broadband will enable local people:

- To see and talk to their family, friends and colleagues anywhere in the world using services like Skype
- To access medical and care services without having to travel miles
- To access the latest online teaching and information sources and file homework online
- To download pictures, music, games or movies much faster
- To have fast access to all online business and government services
- To have the same online experience, or better, as anyone living in a town or city.

Lack of Coverage

Huge areas of Herefordshire have no broadband at all, while much of what

remains does not meet the Universal Service requirement. Businesses in the centre of Hereford often struggle to achieve a 2 Mb connection and are being strangled by the lack of connectivity.

Nowhere in the county presently enjoys anything like superfast broadband. Most stand to miss out on superfast coverage under normal circumstances and many areas have no mobile phone reception.

Economic Renewal

The economic effects of this neglect are all too evident, in low wages and scarce job opportunities, particularly for the young. Yet Herefordshire is a county that is fizzing with creativity. Hereford is the home of British Special Forces, and there are many small technology companies in the county.

Superfast broadband would allow Hereford City to anchor the western end of a technology corridor stretching to the Malvern Science Park, and through to Worcester and Birmingham. There are also national food and agri-businesses, online retailers, hi-tech service providers, industrial manufacturers as well as local farming and tourism businesses that would hugely benefit.

Survey Results

A recent survey revealed that almost three quarters of our rural businesses already understand that superfast broadband is essential to their continued development. They realise the value that improved connectivity would bring and are desperate to exploit it.

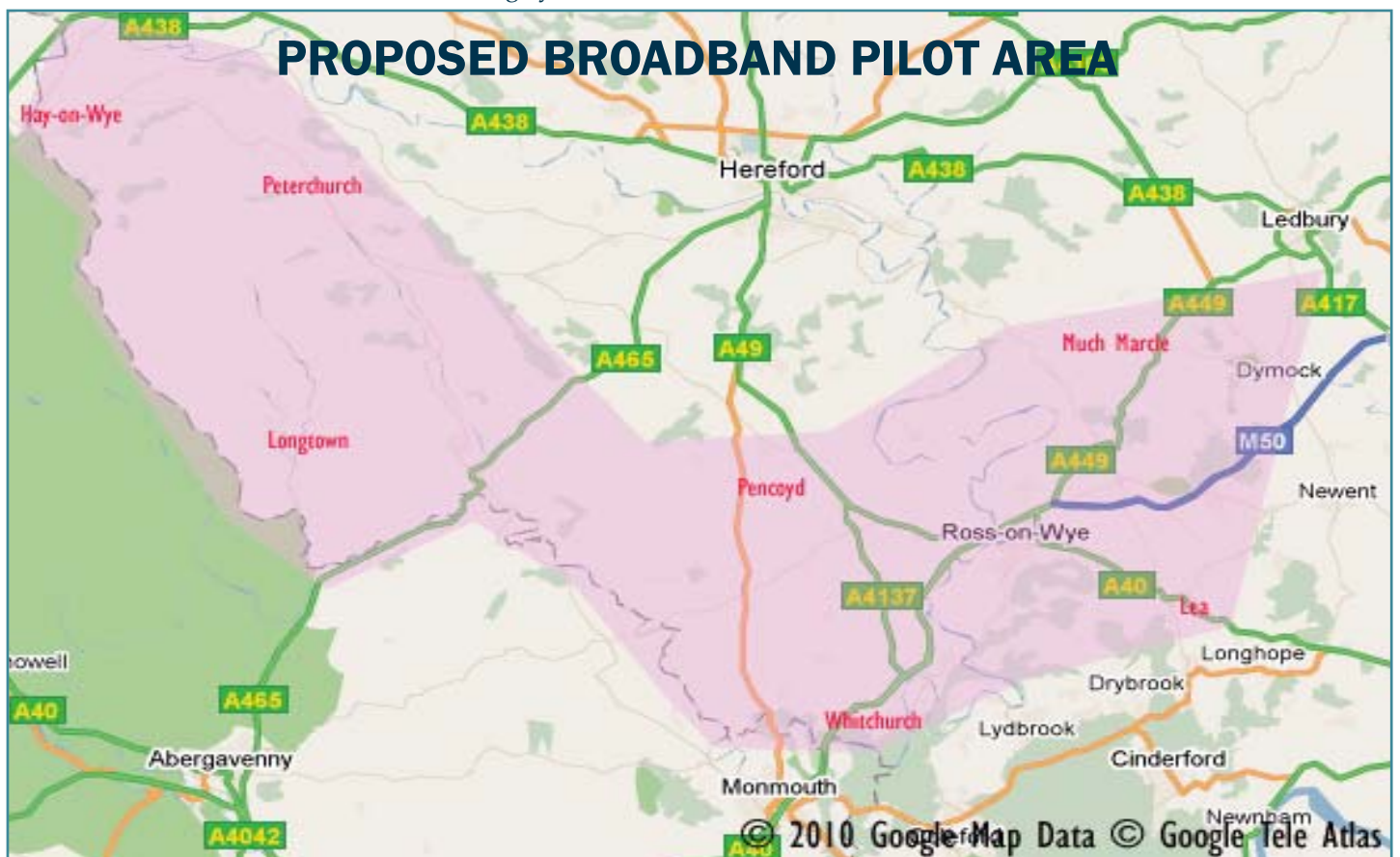
Social Renewal

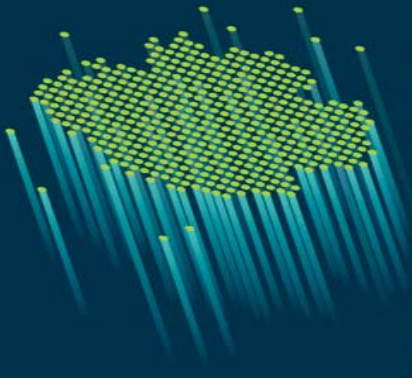
Many local people may not appreciate that the future of rural communities in Herefordshire is directly tied to digital connectivity. Many farmers are isolated by the lack of broadband communications because many public services now expect connectivity, without which they cannot meet statutory obligations. Older people, who would have high internet take-up in other areas, are cut off in villages which are losing post offices, shops and other infrastructure.

More than anything else superfast broadband and improved digital connectivity will shape the county's renaissance and boost our economic prospects.

Jesse Norman

[MORE](#)





FASTBROADBAND 4HEREFORDSHIRE

ENSURING A POSITIVE DIGITAL FUTURE

FASTBROADBAND4HEREFORDSHIRE (FB4H)

is a county wide community action group. Its mission is to accelerate the provision of broadband to transform the economic and social prospects of Herefordshire.

Its main roll is to help local groups:

- assess demand
- identify appropriate suppliers
- or create their own solutions

FB4H will be working closely with both MPs, Herefordshire Council, Parish & Town Councils and local and national organisations to ensure that Herefordshire has a positive digital future.

JESSE'S CONNECTIONS

Well done to Mike Bolton and Henry James, who met at the first summit, for setting up Marches Media. "We are working with Rutland Telecom," Mike has told us, "to implement their model in areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire where this system is the best way forward. We hope to have contracts signed during 2010 to implement the Rutland solution in at least one village. Henry James will be driving the marketing

side of the partnership." Henry reports that he is completing a feasibility study in Shobdon and hopes to present the results to the Parish Council soon. Almeley, Dilwyn, Eardisland and Kimbolton will follow on. For those who did not attend Summit 1, Rutland Telecom is delivering next generation broadband from £30 per month with 24 Mbs download speed. **Go to: www.marchesmedia.com**

Thank you to Councillor John Jarvis for ensuring that broadband readiness is recognised in all future planning applications.



Cumbria was one of the other areas to win a pilot scheme. To learn how their community enterprise is spreading fibre optics to some of England's very remotest places. **Visit www.cybermoor.org**

CBN supports, promotes and develops community-owned broadband schemes. It has helped more than 100 projects directly and connected another 200 project promoters throughout Great Britain. Read: *Fibre to the Home - a Community Approach*. **Visit: www.broadband.coop**

THE RACE TO INFINITY

Your town needs YOU!

We are taking part in The Race to Infinity, which is giving five lucky areas the chance to be one of the next to enjoy BT's new superfast fibre optic broadband, BT Infinity.

To vote go to bt.com/racetoinfinity

brought to you by **BT**

RACE is ON

BT's Race to Infinity is giving people the chance to vote online for their area to become one of the first to enjoy fibre optic broadband.

The five areas which have the largest percentage of votes by December 31st 2010 will win the chance to bring fibre optic broadband to their area and BT will give a donation of computer equipment worth £5,000 to a local community project.

If you live in Bromyard, Burghill, Hereford, Kington, Leominster, Ledbury, Madley, Ross, or Tenbury Wells you will be eligible to enter. Register your vote with fastbroadband4herefordshire.org.uk

Winning exchanges will be enabled by early 2012 subject to availability, survey, terms and conditions. Exchanges need 1,000 premises to be eligible to be one of the winning exchanges.

INCA the Independent Networks Cooperative Association is a great source of technical information on rural broadband. **Go to: www.inca.coop**

Following the example of Goodrich, Longtown, Shobdon, Walford and Whitchurch parish councils, I would urge all ward, town and parish councillors to work together to find out how much demand there is for broadband in their areas. **FB4H** has prepared a questionnaire that can be 'personalised' to each village or town. **FB4H** will also analyse the results for you. **Go to: www.fastbroadband4herefordshire.org.uk**