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SUPER-FAST FIBRE BROADBAND TO BE ROLLED OUT TO 25,000 MORE HOMES AND BUSINESSES IN BRISTOL AREA

Bitton, Filton, Nailsea and Winterbourne included in latest phase of BT's £2.5 billion super-fast broadband programme

BT today announced that more 25,000 more homes and businesses in Bristol and nearby towns will have access to super-fast fibre broadband by the end of next year at the latest.

Bitton, Filton, Nailsea and Winterbourne are the latest communities to benefit from BT's £2.5 billion roll-out plans for super-fast broadband. They are among 14 communities in the South West and 156 across the UK included in today's announcement.

More than half a million homes and businesses in the South West now either have access to the sophisticated technology or will do so by the end of next year.

Super-fast broadband, using 'fibre to street cabinet' technology (FTTC), offers much faster download speeds of up to 40Mbps, potentially rising to 60Mbps, and upstream speeds of 10Mbps, which could rise to 15Mbps in the future.

BT's local network business Openreach expects to make super-fast fibre broadband available to two thirds of the UK by the end of 2015 in the biggest single investment in super-fast broadband ever undertaken in this country.

Jon Reynolds, BT's South West regional director, said: "The roll-out of super-fast broadband across the South West is continuing to gather momentum. About 80,000 homes and businesses in the region now have access to the benefits of this exciting technology and we expect to pass the half a million mark next year.

"At a time of difficult economic conditions super-fast broadband is being rolled-out in the UK at a faster pace than anywhere else in the world. BT is making one of the largest private sector investments in the South West in recent times and this is boosting the prosperity of the region as well as transforming the internet for businesses and households.

"We want to make super-fast broadband available as widely as possible, but beyond our current commercial roll-out plans there are locations where we will need to work with the public sector to install the technology.

“We have already been talking to local authorities in addition to constructive meetings with the West of England Local Economic Partnership about ensuring their communities are able to benefit as fully as possible.”

Super-fast broadband benefits include users being able to send and receive large amounts of data much more quickly and efficiently and having the ability to run multiple bandwidth-hungry applications at the same time.

A music track can be downloaded in about two seconds, a whole music album in 30 seconds and a feature length HD movie in ten minutes. Upload speeds are the fastest in the UK, allowing large videos and data files to be sent almost instantly and activities, such as uploading hi-resolution photos to Facebook, to be completed in seconds.

Unlike other companies, Openreach will offer access to service providers on an open, wholesale basis thereby supporting a competitive market. Whilst the majority of homes and households in an upgraded area will be able to benefit from super-fast broadband, a minority will not initially be able to do so. BT will continue to work to find solutions for these remaining locations.

Of the 14 South West communities included in today’s announcement, Bitton, Crownhill, Lytchett Minster, Melksham, Shepton Mallet, Winterbourne and Warminster are expected to go live in 2011; and Plympton, Broadstone, Filton, Frome, Nailsea, Saltash and Verwood in 2012.

For further information on Openreach’s super-fast broadband programme visit www.superfast-openreach.co.uk

ENDS

Communities in Bristol area Currently Due to Get Super-Fast Broadband

Exchanges currently enabled: Bristol North, Bristol West, Downend, Portishead, Worle

Exchanges due to go live by end of year: Bath Kingsmead, Midsomer Norton, Radstock.

Questions and Answers:

Q. What criteria has BT used to select the latest locations to benefit from fibre-based broadband?

A. BT has consulted closely with its communications provider and service provider customers and with local and national government agencies to agree this next set of locations.

Q. How is BT making its fibre-based broadband technology available to consumers, businesses and service providers?

A. BT will offer access on an open, wholesale basis through both Openreach and BT Wholesale.

Q. Will every line in a chosen exchange area get SFBB?

A. No. Due to the current network topography, and the economics of deployment, it is likely that a small minority of premises within the selected exchange areas will not be able to be served by this technology in the short term. However, Openreach is actively looking at alternative solutions for these locations.