

Suffolk County Council News Release

Media contact: Andrew St Ledger, Communications, Tel: 01473 264389, Mob: 07779 322630, Email: andrew.stledger@suffolk.gov.uk

Government gives go ahead for early start to Suffolk local broadband plan

Plans to bring Suffolk's broadband network into the twenty first century are to be fast tracked, the Government announced today.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has confirmed that Suffolk will be one of five counties to be the first to kick off their government-backed programmes to make superfast broadband available across their areas.

Having missed out on an initial funding round but later awarded £11.68m from Broadband Delivery UK, Suffolk is now a leading county in the Government's aim to create the best broadband network in Europe.

It means Suffolk can begin the process of finding a contractor to carry out the work with a target completion date of March 2015.

The aim is to have 85% of Suffolk premises with access to superfast (20Mbps or greater) fibre optic broadband. The remaining 15% of premises will be served by fixed wireless broadband.

In June, Suffolk County Council agreed to invest up to £10m in the project - a move which almost certainly proved crucial in securing the backing from Government.

Suffolk County Council Leader Mark Bee said:

"This is the most important milestone so far in our campaign to deliver better broadband for Suffolk. It's incredible to think how far we've come in such a short space of time.

"People, businesses and local communities can now really look forward to a broadband revolution which will change their lives."

Call to action

Over the next six months, the Suffolk Better Broadband Programme Board, led by Suffolk County Council and including representatives borough and district council, local businesses and the voluntary sector, will be working on developing a comprehensive picture of priority areas in Suffolk. A campaign will be launched to encourage people to register their interest in superfast broadband. This will be used to help decide how the project is rolled out across Suffolk.

Andy Wood, Chief Executive of Adnams, said:

"This is tremendous news for Suffolk. High speed broadband is an essential piece of infrastructure that is a vital ingredient for businesses of all sizes across the county to be competitive and successful. This announcement, together with the announcement by BT earlier in the week, means Suffolk is potentially in the fast lane by being one of first

