

What is the Making Kent Quicker Programme?

Kent County Council is working with the Government's broadband agency, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) to improve access to superfast broadband services.

To date, this work has already brought superfast broadband to over 125,000 homes and businesses, who would otherwise have been left with no, or slow, broadband. This means that 92% of properties across Kent and Medway can now access a superfast broadband service of at least 24mbps.

We are now working with BDUK on a second project to further extend the reach of superfast broadband. This is part of the Government's national broadband programme to ensure that at least 95% of properties across the UK can access superfast broadband by the end of the 2017. In Kent, we are aiming to achieve 95% coverage by the end of 2017 and 95.7% coverage by September 2018.

Who is BDUK?

Broadband Delivery UK is the Government's broadband agency.

Why is this work needed?

Without our Making Kent Quicker Programme many businesses and communities would continue to have either no, or slow, broadband services as there are no commercial/market-led plans to upgrade infrastructure in many parts of the County.

The 'Making Kent Quicker' Programme is focusing on these areas.

How much is Kent investing?

Given the importance of broadband connectivity to Kent's businesses and rural communities, Kent County Council has invested £10 million in the BDUK Contract 1 project. For every £1 of Kent money being invested, the Council has leveraged nearly £3 from other sources (approximately £1 from Central Government and £2 from BT).

We are also investing £5.6 million in our new, Contract 2 BDUK project, which is being matched with a further £5.6 million from the Government.

Which areas will benefit from Kent County Council's broadband upgrade work?

The 'Making Kent Quicker' Programme is focusing on providing upgrades to those areas that have slow or poor broadband and will not receive better broadband services through existing commercial/market-led plans to upgrade broadband infrastructure.

We are particularly keen to ensure that no area misses out. As a result, we have undertaken extensive consultation with operators and asked all broadband providers to confirm and provide robust evidence as to which premises in Kent and Medway they are currently able, or plan, to serve.

Why is this work not delivering superfast broadband for all properties?

To date, our Making Kent Quicker Project work has brought superfast broadband to over 125,000 homes and businesses across Kent.

Although this has created a real step change in rural broadband connectivity, it will not be possible to reach every property in areas of 'market failure' with our existing project work due to the costs involved. This is because the costs of bringing wired superfast broadband connectivity to all homes and businesses would require in the region of an additional £100 million of public subsidy.

The Government has, however, launched a new scheme for properties that are unable to receive speeds of at least 2Mbps. This uses satellite and fixed wireless broadband technologies that are relatively quick to install. The scheme also includes options for speeds significantly greater than 2Mbps. You can find more information about the The Government's Better Broadband Scheme on our website.

My property is in the project area. When will I get better broadband?

Over 125,000 homes and businesses have so far benefited from the upgrade work which would have otherwise been left with poor broadband connectivity. Details of which areas have gone live to date are published on our postcode checker at www.kent.gov.uk/broadband.

How is the roll out plan being decided?

We want to achieve the best possible broadband coverage for Kent and Medway with the resources available. To achieve this, the network is being designed and built in the most technically efficient and cost effective way to maximise speed and coverage. The rollout plan will take into account many factors such as existing infrastructure, planning requirements, local demographics and geography.

Given the size of the project, it is not possible to plan every area at the same time, so some areas will be surveyed and enabled before others.

Why can't the project be delivered faster?

This work represents one of Kent's largest infrastructure projects and has an ambitious timescale for completion. The BDUK Contract 1 Project build, alone, involved laying over 7,000 km of fibre optic cable, installing over 5,000 fibre distribution points and more than 1.4 million hours of construction time.

We are acutely aware of the frustrations that many rural communities and businesses have with their current broadband connections and are committed to delivering this project as soon as possible.

As BT is installing the network will I have to use BT as my Internet Service Provider?

No. The infrastructure upgrades being funded by this project are being built by BT Openreach and will be 'open access'. This means that any Internet Service Provider can choose to use the infrastructure to provide customers with new services.

Currently around 80 communications providers offer fibre broadband services over BT's network. This will enable Kent residents and businesses to choose the provider and broadband package that best suits their needs.

To find out more about available broadband services please visit www.kent.gov.uk/broadband/broadband-services

Will my existing Internet Service Provider offer me the new broadband services?

Any Internet Service Provider can choose to use the infrastructure to provide customers with new services. You will need to check with your current Internet Service Provider to see what products they are prepared to offer.

What do I need to do to access the new services when they become available?

Once services are available in your area, you will need to contact your ISP to find out if they are offering a fibre-based service and tell them you wish to upgrade.

What might cause changes to planned deployment?

During the network design and build phases, technical problems may be encountered which means that the planned implementation is either not technically or financially viable, or will take longer than anticipated. Such issues may arise from surveys where practical problems are identified (such as ducts being blocked) which require more work than originally anticipated.

Why is my postcode featured in a commercial rollout programme? What does this mean?

If your property is listed under the postcode checker as being in a commercial roll out programme, then this means that your property should be receiving fibre-based broadband from a telecommunications company. This will be funded by the company's own investment. Such commercial rollouts in Kent include BT Openreach, Gigaclear and Virgin Media.

Being covered in the commercial rollout means that your property does not feature in the 'Making Kent Quicker' project and you will need to contact the listed provider for further details on deployment and faster broadband availability to your area.

What is the difference between "standard or basic broadband" and superfast services?

Basic or standard broadband delivers a minimum of 2Mbps speed to a property. Superfast broadband will deliver speeds of 24Mbps and above.

Why should I upgrade to superfast broadband? Are there many benefits?

There are a range of benefits that you will see if you switch to a better broadband package. Faster speeds mean that multiple users can be online at the same time, quicker downloads, improved online streaming to name just a few. Many who switch to superfast broadband find it easier to work from home as well.

Why can't you give me an exact date that I will be able to receive better broadband?

This is one of Kent's largest infrastructure projects and due to its size, it's not possible to plan every area at the same time, so some areas will be enabled before others. As we deliver the rollout we're working closely with our partners to take into account all the factors that may have an impact on the

speed of delivery. In order to increase engineering efficiency in some cases, we may adjust the detail in some phases of the rollout to ensure we make best use of the limited resources we have available.

We appreciate how frustrating it can be to not get the information you need, so we'll keep updating our information as often as we can as our plans develop.

Will I get better broadband automatically when my cabinet goes live?

No, you will not receive better broadband automatically. Once your cabinet goes live you will need to contact your internet service provider and ask to be upgraded. This may involve an increase in price depending on what package and service provider you use – and whether you are tied into a particular contract.

How do I optimise my current speeds?

A guide to how you optimise your broadband speeds can be found by clicking these links:

<http://www.increasebroadbandspeed.co.uk/2014/wifi-optimisation>

<http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/internet/broadband-speeds/how-to-improve-your-broadband-speeds/>