

All South Hams Leisure Centres will Open.

Thanks to a one off cash injection of £243,000, approved by Councillors at South Hams District Council, all of the Districts Leisure Centres will be fully opened in October.

When the lockdown restrictions began to be lifted this summer, South Hams District Council were determined to do what they could to reinstate some leisure facilities in the District. Previously South Hams and their leisure provider, Fusion Lifestyle were unable to open all facilities, due to the additional costs of creating COVID secure facilities and with a reduced footfall. The Kingsbridge pool and the Dartmouth Leisure Centre were unable to be opened.

COVID has hit the leisure industry hard, with operators covering the cost of maintaining centres with no income coming in, and this additional funding is required to allow centres to open at significantly reduced capacities. It will also support all the new safety measures required to open within government guidelines, including meticulous cleaning regimes, staff training and new booking systems

South Hams District Council recognises the huge health and well-being benefits that these facilities can provide, but had to balance the decision to open all of the centres with the additional cost, which could only be provided by dipping into their reserves

However, Councillors decided that this was a cost they felt must be spent, for the health and wellbeing of the whole District.

Cllr Judy Pearce, Leader of South Hams District Council said: "I am pleased that we have made this difficult decision today. There are significant financial implications for the Council as we have taken this money out of our reserves. However, we have now reinstated much loved and greatly needed facilities across the District, not least to teach our children to swim and for medical referrals.

"So I say to all residents, we will get the centres open, so now it is up to you, we are asking our residents to use the leisure centres or risk losing them. The only thing that will keep these centres open now is if we can get the footfall up, and bring in much needed income.

"We do not know what will happen in the future, we all know that we are facing a potential second wave of COVID-19, so there is a chance that we may need to revisit this decision, but I believe we must remain optimistic and get these centres open even at great cost to the Council's finances, to benefit the wellbeing of residents. It is especially important in a coastal area that children are able to go to swimming classes again."

"This must be the best result in exceptionally difficult circumstances".

Cllr Hawkins South Hams Executive for Health and Wellbeing said: "I am delighted that the Council today supported opening all our Leisure Centres. They are an important part of our communities and the facilities they provide are important to our residents, families and children. I recently meet Peter King from Fusion and was impressed with the COVID related safety measures that are to be put in place. This is a vote of confidence in our centres as well as protecting jobs".

Anthony Cawley, Director of Operations at Fusion said "We are delighted that all our centres are now able to re-open during October, as we know how important our facilities are to the local community. Many leisure centres have not been eligible for government funding during

the pandemic. We hope that industry-wide campaigns like #saveleisure raise awareness of the desperate need to keep our centres open and financially viable for the future of the nation's health and wellbeing”

DARTMOUTH LEISURE CENTRE WILL OPEN ON 14TH OCTOBER.

Track and Trace Hardship Payment Scheme

You will be aware that the Government has launched its Track and Trace Hardship Payment Scheme. This is when people who have been advised they need to isolate for 14 days and are unable to work are eligible for a £500 payment. This launched on the 28 September and the Council needs to have its scheme up and running by the 12 October (with backdating to the 28 September where required). This date is mandated by Central Government. The Council's work will include designing the application form and process, including how to get the money to the people who need it most. We are confident that we can deliver this in time.

Whilst the criteria is clear as to who is eligible for the scheme, there is an additional discretionary scheme which allows local authorities to make payments for people who are not in receipt of benefits, but are unable to work from home, if their employer is not able to pay them sick pay and self-isolation will cause them hardship. We are working with our colleagues in the other Devon authorities to ensure our scheme is joined up, robust and will help those that need it the most without creating a postcode lottery.

You will of course know that any local discretionary policy would ordinarily need formal adoption by the Executive. However, because of the time scale involved and the need to have a policy in place by 12 October, to avoid causing any hardship to any of our residents who are required to self-isolate, it is Andy Bates's intention, as Chief Executive, to use his emergency powers provision to enable us to commence the scheme, and to report this to the next Executive Meeting in order to be able to note that the Emergency Powers have been used.

Council Prepares for New Recycling Service.

PLEASE NOTE: CHANGES BEGIN FROM 5 OCTOBER - THIS MAY INCLUDE A CHANGE OF COLLECTION DAY - CHECK YOUR COLLECTION DAY ONLINE

In Spring, 2021, South Hams District Council will be introducing an all new 'Super Recycler' service, so that every household can recycle more.

The planned changes will add glass and a wider range of plastics to the list of items collected at the kerbside.

In preparation for the new service, a full review of the collection rounds has taken place and new routes will come in to effect from 5 October 2020. From this date, it is possible that crews will collect at a different time of the day for every household so it's important that all waste is out by 7 a.m. For about two thirds of residents, actual collection days will change.

Reviewing the days and weeks we collect recycling and waste is a common part of delivering the service. These reviews are needed periodically to take account of new properties, and this round review is long overdue in South Hams.

With the incoming new service, now is the perfect time to implement a full review of the rounds. This will ensure that the rounds have been amended to take into account the changes that are needed for the new service to work effectively in 2021.

The new recycling service was originally planned to come into effect in September 2020 but has been delayed due to the impact of lockdown on vital supply chains and preparations.

Residents in the South Hams are already very good at recycling all of the items currently collected. With the introduction of the new service, South Hams District Council wants to help residents become Super Recyclers and recycle even more every single week.

Recycling more and throwing away less reduces the impact on the environment because less energy is used producing new materials and we can make the best use of our resources.

In 2019, South Hams District Council joined many other councils and Central Government, in declaring a climate change and biodiversity emergency. While tackling the global issues seems an overwhelming task, recycling is one of the easiest way for every household to do their bit.

The new service will introduce a new weekly separate food waste collection and weekly recycling collection. It will allow residents to recycling glass and plastic packaging, such as yoghurt pots, margarine tubs, meat trays and fruit punnets, at the kerbside. Garden waste and refuse collections will remain fortnightly.

All properties impacted by the day changes will receive a letter this week, 14 – 18 September, informing them of their new collection day. If residents have not received a letter and want to check if they have been affected they can use the ‘find my collection day’ feature on our website, www.southhams.gov.uk/recyclingwaste. Households not affected by the day change may notice that the time of day their collection is completed may change. Residents are reminded that collections can happen any time after 7 a.m. on their collection day.

Cllr Keith Baldry, South Hams District Council’s Executive Member for Environment, said: “We are delighted to be bringing this improved service to our residents in Spring, 2021. Many of them have been telling us that they want to recycle more materials, because they know how important recycling is.

“The collection route changes are a necessary step in the preparation for the new service. Residents may experience low levels of disruption while our hard working collection crews adjust to the new routes. If missed collections do occur they can be reported on our website the following day.”

Cllr Baldry added: “While we’ve unfortunately had to delay the new service until 2021, we hope the delay will mean that we have more time to talk to more people about the new service as lockdown restrictions ease.”

Residents will receive further information on the new service through their door in early 2021.

Collection calendars issued with council tax statements in March finish in September. This was in preparation for the original new service date. A downloadable copy of the calendar for the rest of 20/21 is available at www.southhams.gov.uk/recyclingwaste.

South Hams CVS

Tuesday 13th October Introduction to Wellbeing Listening - Inner Compass Guide, this is the 4th time we are offering this popular training - spaces available.

Thursday 22nd October 5 Steps to suicide Awareness – Pete’s Dragons NOW FULL – we have opened a waiting list and to see if there is demand to repeat in future

Wednesday 4th November Equality & Diversity – Zebra Training NOW FULL - – we have opened a waiting list and to see if there is demand to repeat in future

Wednesday 9th December – Funding for Community Groups Skill Share – spaces available

And a special message from South Hams CVS:

Dear CVS Local Supporters

We hope you are well in these difficult times. It has never felt so important that we are connecting and working together in the best ways we can for the individuals and communities we are helping. South Hams CVS staff are still working from home to support South Hams organisations and communities. We have a number of exciting new projects and want to be sustainable to enable these and to support all our groups adapting to these new times. South Hams CVS are always thankful for your membership to support our core learning programme, information and advice services. Your annual membership subscriptions are really needed to keep our foundations solid so we can continue delivering our local activities and ongoing support to South Hams Communities. This year our annual membership rate (which will run from 1 October – 31 September) is still £50, with a concessionary rate of £25 for smaller organisations. If you would like to be a member but really don't have the funds to make a payment, please let us know and we will consider each request individually. Details of benefits and an application form are attached.

If you are renewing your membership, THANK YOU and we have tried to make it simple, please fill in the details below and return by reply.

Test and Trace QR Code

NHS Track and Trace QR Code poster

Across the South Hams and West Devon, pubs, restaurants, hairdressers and cinemas are being encouraged to have NHS QR code posters displayed on entry to their businesses so customers can use their smartphones to easily check-in.

The move comes ahead of a national launch of the NHS COVID-19 app across England and Wales on Thursday 24 September.

The government will be supporting businesses and venues to display the QR codes, which can be downloaded via a website to display as posters in premises.

Following the launch of the new app, customers and visitors will be able to check-in on entry with their phone instead of filling out a check-in book specific to a business. This will allow NHS Test and Trace to contact customers with public health advice should there be a COVID-19 outbreak.

Help Kickstart Young People Into Work

Kickstart Scheme

Have you applied for Kickstart funding? Kickstart is a scheme to help get young people into work and to help revive the economy.

Businesses can sign up to the Kickstart scheme, giving unemployed young people, aged 16-24, the opportunity to work through government-subsidised jobs.

You can use the Kickstart Scheme to create new six-month job placements for young people who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.

The government will fully fund each 'Kickstart' job - paying 100% of the age-relevant National Minimum Wage, National Insurance and pension contributions for 25 hours a week.

You must make sure the roles are eligible for the scheme before submitting your application online.

Business Rates Review - Call for Evidence

Report it - 5 W's The Treasury announced a Call for Evidence on a Business Rates Review and the consultation is in two parts.

The first part is focused on questions on the current business rates reliefs and the multiplier. A copy of the Council's response is attached.

A joint collective response with all of the Devon Business Rates Pooling partners has been compiled (eight Devon Districts, Plymouth, DCC and Torbay). The response urges the Government to close the current Business Rates Tax loophole which allows second home owners to avoid paying any Council Tax or Business Rates on their properties.

The second part of the consultation will be focused on valuation and transitional relief; appeals; maintaining the accuracy of rating lists; the billing process and exploring alternatives to business rates. The deadline will be the end of October.

Appeal to Parents of Young Adults

Face Coverings - I wear mine to protect you

We are appealing to parents and families of our younger residents, who are late teens and early twenties, to help us to remind them of how important it is to follow the Covid-19 guidance - Hands, Face, Space.

This follows a rise in cases in younger adults which may spread into the community and put older relatives at risk. With your help, we can make sure that everybody follows these important but simple rules:

Hands. Wash your hands, regularly and for 20 seconds.

Face. Wear a face covering over your mouth and nose if you are in an enclosed space and in close contact with people you don't normally meet.

Space. Always stay 2 metres away from people you don't live with. Or 1 metre with extra precautions, like extra ventilation, screens or face coverings.

And of course, if you have Covid symptoms, get a test and self-isolate for ten days to protect others.

The Rule of 6

To make Covid restrictions easier to understand and to keep control of the virus, the government is using new restrictions for how many people we can legally meet.

Remember, you can now only socialise in groups of up to 6, both indoors and outdoors, with people you don't live with.

The rule does not apply to schools and workplaces, people living together or in the same support bubble, or to weddings, funerals and organised team sports.

Travelling Abroad?

Holiday

If you're planning to leave the beautiful South Hams and travel abroad for a late summer break, then you'll need to be up-to-date on the latest travel advice.

This advice can include the need to self-isolate, quarantine or undergo testing for coronavirus, or even restrictions on entry to a country.

Before and while you are travelling, check:

FCDO coronavirus advice

FCDO travel advice for the countries you are travelling to

Please remember to make sure you have appropriate travel insurance in case you have unexpected costs. You don't want to get stuck abroad with invalid insurance.

Local authorities and building safety

Please see the email from the LABC, below, advising of the documents and briefings to senior managers and members of Local Authorities explaining the radical changes brought about by the Building Safety Bill. It emphasises the importance of the changes and their significant impact on local Authorities.

Please note the National Webinar on the 13th October. Click on the link for details and to register.

I have also attached the downloaded September Briefing for Local Authorities.

Over the coming weeks LABC will be briefing local authority leaders and senior managers. We are providing a range of documents and events explaining the radical changes outlined by the draft Building Safety Bill which sets up the Building Safety Regulator. In doing so we will be highlighting:

The scope is far wider than high rise towers – starting at 18m/six storey buildings and is likely to widen over time.

Both local authorities and individual senior managers will be liable in the event of failures

The inclusion of existing buildings will bring a large volume of additional work for building control

Even though local council budgets are under great pressure, building control will need investment in resourcing, competency, resilience and succession planning

The new regulator will monitor local authorities and has the power to intervene if an individual authority is not able to deliver its duties and responsibilities.

On 13 October there is an important national webinar for local authority senior managers which LABC is promoting on behalf of the HSE, LGS, NFCC and MHCLG – please encourage your head of service, Chief Executive and political leadership to attend. We will also provide briefings to those directing housing, environmental health, asset management, building control and fire and rescue services. After this we will be running a series of digital events focussing on the implementation of changes in building control.

We have also set up two dedicated pages on our website with briefings, documents and other resources – one public and one for members.

It is vital your senior management know how your authority will be affected by these changes (we have already contacted them directly with the briefing document "Local Authorities and Building Safety") So please download and share it with them again as soon as you can, You can download it here.

Thank you for your help – and please email me at buildingsafety@labc.co.uk if you have any questions or need any further information.

Connecting Devon and Somerset

Please find below, a broadband programme updates for South Hams from the Connecting Devon and Somerset team.

The briefings include:

an overview of CDS and commercial coverage – the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport says CDS has “delivered connectivity to more premises than any other English programme”.

progress with the CDS Fibre Extension Programme – thousands of homes and businesses will benefit from new full fibre access.

Rural Gigabit Vouchers – vouchers worth over £1 million are helping to pay for broadband connections to hundreds of homes and businesses across the County.

Mobile Boost – a new scheme to help rural homes and businesses struggling with poor indoor mobile phone coverage.

an update on the Government’s national fibre “outside-in” programme.

Connecting Devon and Somerset

Programme Update

Introduction

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) is a central and local government partnership that subsidises the construction of broadband infrastructure mainly in rural areas, bridging gaps in commercially funded networks.

“Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) has achieved genuine success during their management of broadband delivery in the region. CDS has directly provided superfast access to more than 300,000 homes and businesses, often in rural and sparsely populated areas. They have also delivered connectivity to more premises than any other English programme, and this is being further complemented by the live contract they have with Airband. The contracts with Airband will have delivered connectivity to c.21,000 premises across (North West) Devon and West Somerset by the end of Summer (2020)” – Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, May 2020.

The CDS programme is the largest and one of the most cost-effective in England with costs per premise in the lowest quartile nationally*. CDS covers the local authority areas of Devon and Somerset County Councils, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset Councils.

Coverage across the whole area is around 90% at nearly 1 million premises †.

*Source: Building Digital UK (BDUK). † Total coverage = CDS funded + commercially funded.

Summary for South Hams District

· Total premises: 50,165

o i.e. the number of homes or businesses in the area

- CDS superfast achieved: 24,549
- CDS superfast planned: 275*
- Commercial superfast achieved: 14,348
- Commercial planned: 784
- Total delivered or planned: 39,956
- Remaining: 10,209†

Notes

*CDS superfast premises planned includes:

- 10 homes and businesses will be provided with full fibre to the premise by Airband under the CDS Fibre Extension Programme
- Rural Gigabit Vouchers for 148 premises (total value £282,520) in Tigley, Totnes, Halwell, Moreleigh, Moorhaven, Ivybridge, South Brent, Dartmouth, Modbury, Kingsbridge, Sparkwell and Blackawton.
- A further 107 premises in Bickleigh, Wotter & Shaugh Prior will receive full fibre access delivered by Openreach under the CDS Fibre Extension Programme.

† CDS is seeking to cover as many remaining premises as possible through a new £38 million programme and supported by £18.7 million of Government funding

NB Premise numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred reflecting the accuracy of returns from commercial operators. Total broadband delivered or planned includes premises served by more than one operator. See also Commercial coverage analysis.

Take-up of CDS funded broadband services is nearly 70% compared with a national average of 61.4%, an increase of circa 5% over the last quarter. Source: Building Digital UK (BDUK). As a result, CDS has more live customers than the next largest local body has potential connections. The CDS programmes are expected to deliver an £800 million boost to the region's economic productivity. Source: UK Broadband Impact Study, SQW

CDS's current and future interventions are contributing to the Government's commitment of nationwide gigabit-capable coverage. One gigabit is the same as 1,000 megabits – so it's a big leap forward in connection speeds. Gigabit-capable broadband also supports symmetrical connections – meaning upload and download speeds can be the same.

Funding for the programme comes from a variety of sources; UK Government and the European Union via Whitehall departments and Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities and the private sector including monies for reinvestment under the Government's "gainshare" agreement with Openreach.

Current activity

CDS has launched its Fibre Extension Programme, comprising two new initiatives with Openreach and Airband that will, between them, deliver full fibre to more than 8,000 additional homes and businesses across the CDS area by the end of 2021. Surveying and engineering will follow Government Covid-19 social distancing rules.

The new collaboration with Openreach is a £6 million expansion of fibre broadband coverage helping villages, hamlets and isolated homes and businesses in particularly hard to reach or deprived rural areas. Survey teams for Openreach have already begun working in communities, planning the best routes for these new fibre connections. This work will help shape the design of the local networks and ensure roll-out can happen as rapidly as possible.

Around 2,000 homes and businesses in more than 20 communities* will benefit. In your district, these include 107 premises in Bickleigh, Wotter & Shaugh Prior. * See Notes for communities.

Funding is a reinvestment of monies returned to CDS under the Government's "gainshare" agreement with Openreach, effectively a dividend on the high take-up of broadband services by the public and businesses.

CDS' contract with Airband will deliver full fibre connections to over 6,000 premises in Devon. This represents both an upgrading of premises, originally intended for fixed wireless coverage, as well as additional coverage, made possible through the switch to fibre. Engineering began in early July in North Devon. In total, some 57 communities* in Central Devon, Torridge and West Devon, and South West Devon are set to benefit from the roll-out. * See Notes for list of communities

These schemes will complement a big £38 million CDS programme supported by £18.7 million of Government funding to extend gigabit-capable broadband to tens of thousands of homes and businesses in six lots. These cover all parts of the region not presently addressed by the live Airband contract in Lot 4, with all premises not currently at superfast or in credible commercial plans eligible for coverage. Initial Tenders arrived in June and a process of negotiation seeking to optimise proposals has taken place. Final Tenders were submitted prior to August 25th and contracts are due to be awarded in December 2020. We would anticipate providing a further detailed update in early October.

It is anticipated that work on the new programme will begin in early 2021 and take up to three years to complete.

In parallel with these initiatives, CDS is working closely with BDUK to expand take-up of the Government's Rural Gigabit Voucher programme. CDS is offering support to communities who wish to contract with telecoms providers to design and shape bespoke broadband solutions for their areas. To date, 4231 vouchers have been issued in the region with a value of nearly £5 million pounds, representing nearly 25% of all vouchers issued nationally. CDS will provide additional financial support where appropriate through its Community Challenge Programme to help bridge any local funding gaps.

In your district, 148 vouchers have been issued, with a value of £282,520. These are funding build in the following communities, with the Community Challenge Programme providing support; Tigley, Totnes, Halwell, Moreleigh, Moorhaven, Ivybridge, South Brent, Dartmouth, Modbury, Kingsbridge, Sparkwell and Blackawton.

Mobile Boost

CDS is also shortly to announce details of its new Mobile Boost scheme to some of the most rural areas of our region. Funded through the recent HotSW LEP Digital Call, the scheme is aimed at small businesses and households who currently have inadequate indoor mobile phone coverage from their existing provider and who are currently struggling with connectivity due to their rural location. The scheme will offer vouchers with a value of £800 for eligible business and residential premises to acquire a mobile signal booster which will improve internal coverage using OFCOM approved equipment. Whilst the project is predicated on ensuring the ability to make voice calls, the equipment will also improve indoor 4G coverage. The scheme will be promoted through District Council economic development networks and will run alongside current CDS and commercial provision as a further contribution to enhancing digital connectivity within the region. All installers will observe COVID-19 social distancing and safe working practices, in line with evolving industry standards.

National Fibre Programme / Outside In programme

In a recent letter to the leaders of County Councils and Unitary Authorities across England, the Minister of State for Regional and Local Government and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Digital Infrastructure outlined the Government's commitment to supporting the deployment of gigabit broadband across the country, ensuring that every home and business in the UK can access gigabit broadband services as soon as possible. They note that next-generation fixed-line infrastructure brings fast and reliable connectivity, and will drive faster local economic growth and greater social inclusion, especially critical to the levelling-up agenda and helping the economy recover following the COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve its gigabit commitments, the Government is investing £5 billion through the 'Outside-In' programme to deliver gigabit speeds to the hardest-to-reach communities in the UK. In addition to this financial investment, the Government is working with local government to remove the barriers that slow or prevent deployment of infrastructure, through measures including legislative and regulatory reform, and the provision of new digital services, such as Street Manager.

Whilst not referenced specifically, Local Bodies anticipate a significant role in local engagement and communications, though we remain less clear on how the procurement and contractual management elements will work. Our understanding is that contracts will be offered in "bundles" of ca. 3000 – 5000 premises and will be procured and contracted centrally. This raises obvious concerns about CDS' ability to influence coverage and supplier behaviour and we would value considerably more clarity on these points at the earliest opportunity.

Notes about the Fibre Extension Programme

Initial survey work for the CDS Fibre Extension Programme has begun in Oakford, near Bampton, and Combeinteignhead, near Teignmouth. Survey teams working for Openreach will then continue their work across a broader cluster to the north of Tiverton and south of Dulverton, spanning the Devon and Somerset border and a second cluster to the east of Plymouth centred on Bickleigh, Wotter and Shaugh Prior. Once this survey work is completed, precise details on which premises will be connected can be announced and a programme of engineering works will begin.

Additional communities set to benefit from new Openreach fibre connections over the next two years are:

- Blue Anchor
- Brayford and North Molton,
- Brompton Ralph
- Exe Valley
- Haccombe, Rocombe and the Teign Estuary
- Lane End
- Satterleigh & Warkleigh
- South Kentisbury Ford
- South Zeal & Throwleigh,
- Teign Valley
- Twitchen
- Watermouth
- Widecombe Parish
- Yettington

Additional communities set to benefit from Airband fibre connections over the next two years are:

- Berrynarbor
- Kentisbury
- Ilfracombe outskirts
- Lee
- Woolacombe East
- Barnstaple
- Woolacombe West
- Barnstaple East

- Bratton Fleming
- Goodleigh
- Braunton
- Croyde
- Bishop's Tawton
- South Molton
- Landkey
- Abbotsham
- Meshaw
- Bideford
- East Anstey
- Molland
- Weare Giffard
- Fairy Cross
- Instow
- Great Torrington
- Clovelly
- Putford
- Clawton
- Langtree
- Hartland
- Milton Damerel
- Bradworthy
- Shebbear
- St Giles on the Heath
- Halwill Junction
- Tavistock
- Lewtrenchard
- Milton Abbot
- Crapstone

- Lifton
- Bere Alston
- Milton Combe
- North Tawton
- Jacobstowe
- Okehampton outskirts
- Taw Green
- Colebrook
- Hatherleigh
- Northlew
- Cheriton Bishop
- Nomansland
- Riddlecombe
- Dolton
- Kings Nympton
- Chulmleigh
- Dolton West
- Umberleigh
- Beaford

A Note about Coverage

Calculations about an area's actual and future broadband coverage are derived from a combination of public sector contracts, part-funded by public subsidy, with private sector suppliers, and wholly commercially funded provision both current and planned.

Although Government does not set percentage targets for individual local areas, local broadband programmes work with BDUK to analyse and evaluate coverage across their geography to monitor commercial roll-out plans, ensure public-funded contract coverage numbers are being met and to target where future public intervention will be required. Industry analysts, thinkbroadband.com, assess current superfast coverage across Devon and Somerset as being 92.7% whereas CDS puts coverage more conservatively at around 90% at present.

Different factors affect coverage analysis. The inability of Gigaclear to deliver its contracts had a clear impact on the CDS area. The company was under contract to connect 47,000 premises which, if successful, would have increased coverage to around 96%.

The construction of new housing without broadband and changes in commercial roll-out plans also affect coverage in the CDS area. An improvement in the quantity and quality of data from the private sector is also a factor. For example, suppliers are now providing CDS with better data about both their current and planned provision.

For these reasons, CDS is taking a cautious assessment, supported by BDUK, and believes the delivery of gigabit-capable broadband to around a further 69,000 homes and businesses currently across the region requires public subsidy through the ongoing procurement, the Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme and the forthcoming National Fibre Programme.

For further information see the CDS website www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk or email enquiries@connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk.