



Connecting Cumbria

through superfast broadband

November 2011



Welcome

Connecting Cumbria is about networks and connections.

That's a line that rings true for the project in many ways.

It doesn't just refer to the technical aspects of the project: cable and cabinets; speeds and slow spots. It is also about the hundreds of people and organisations who are coming

together, sharing ideas and giving their time to make the vision of superfast broadband in Cumbria a reality.

A web of communities, councillors, public sector partners, commercial organisations and national government are working in partnership to push the project forward.

It is this team effort from all corners of the county, and indeed country, from many areas of expertise and interest, that will ensure that Connecting Cumbria will deliver real improvements, efficiencies and benefits across Cumbria.

This week the Leader of Cumbria County Council, Eddie Martin, Corporate Director for Organisational Development, Jim Savege and I met with government minister Jeremy Hunt, to share our experiences of driving forward a broadband delivery project of this size and complexity.

This month we are also pleased to announce that the independent Connecting Cumbria website is now live online. The site will feature updates from all the partners and will be a central information point as the project progresses.

When the last edition of this newsletter was published we were waiting for the final decision from Cabinet on the recommendation by the Cumbria Leadership Board and Chief Executives' Group to award its Performance Reward Grant to Connecting Cumbria – another example of very welcome support for the project from NHS, police, national park and county, district and parish councils in Cumbria.

We are delighted that this was approved and as a result Connecting Cumbria has received a £6.7million boost.

Finally, and significantly, this week Cumbria County Council has taken the decision to extend the procurement process to select a commercial partner for the project. This has been a difficult but necessary decision to make in order to ensure we find the very best supplier for the role and have all the necessary information we need to do that. See the right hand column on this page for more details.

Councillor Elizabeth Mallinson
**Cumbria County Council's Cabinet Member
for Organisational Development and
ICT portfolio holder**

Extension of procurement process

As you are aware we are currently underway with one of the key procurement elements of the Connecting Cumbria project; the procurement of a main contractor to deliver the infrastructure for the delivery of broadband across rural Cumbria.

Together with our partners, our ambition is to deliver the Connecting Cumbria vision of delivering superfast broadband across the county, and to do that we must secure the best supplier and optimum contract possible.

Whilst we have made very effective progress with the procurement to date, this week we have decided to extend the procurement timetable. This is to make sure that we ultimately get the best deal for Cumbria.

This procurement exercise is utilising the different grant funding that Cumbria has been able to secure for superfast broadband. There are some specific funding areas, such as ERDF funding applications, where further work still needs to be completed to get final confirmation of the level of funding and the associated funding terms.

These funding streams are clearly significant in procurement and contractual terms for both the council and the bidders. This is the reason we have chosen to extend our timescale and to not conclude the procurement process without these areas being finalised. This will ensure we can get the best contract in place for Cumbria. Some of the timescales involved in these funding areas have changed since we started the procurement process, which is the reason we are having to make some changes at this stage.

As a result of the change in the procurement timetable we will be looking to work with all partners to adjust any dependent plans or timetables of work, re-casting the project plan overall. We will still be using the same strategy and approach that the Board have agreed to, but just adjusting some of the timings where necessary.

What is Connecting Cumbria?

A project to deliver a superfast broadband connection to even Cumbria's most rural communities and businesses. Cumbria has been named as one of four national pilots to benefit from better broadband, by government body Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) who have awarded £17.1 million funding to support the project.

Top marks and £6.7m boost for Connecting Cumbria

Cumbria's broadband project has been given a £6.7m boost after Cumbrian local authorities were awarded money by the government for meeting their centrally set targets.

The funding has been allocated from Cumbria's Performance Reward Grant (PRG). The grant is awarded to local authorities in England and the amount of money received depends on how well each authority has performed in meeting its targets.

In total the Government has awarded £150m to local authorities across the country, with Cumbria coming out on top with the £6.7m grant. This year's PRGs were awarded based on performance from 2007 to 2010.

The Chief Executives' Group and Cumbria Leadership Board, which is made up of organisations in the county including Cumbria County Council, NHS Cumbria, police, national park authority and district and parish councils, decide between them how to spend the money.

The money from the PRG is unringfenced so that local authorities have the freedom to choose how they spend it. However, authorities must use the money to be focused on meeting the expectations of residents rather than on meeting bureaucratic targets.

The Chief Executives' Group and Cumbria Leadership Board recommended that all of the £6.7m should go towards Connecting Cumbria, a recommendation which was approved by Cumbria County Council cabinet members at their September meeting.

The money from the grant will add to the £17.1m government funding that has already been allocated by BDUK. The Connecting Cumbria partnership will be bidding for further monies from various bodies in the near future. The extra £6.7m will be an important boost to the overall fund for rolling out super fast broadband in Cumbria and help attract match funding from other sources.

Cllr Eddie Martin, Leader of Cumbria County Council, said: "It is great news that Cumbria has received the highest Performance Reward Grant, it shows that we are one of the best performing counties in the country.

"It was, at first, deliberated as to what the money should be spent on. Connecting Cumbria is a partnership project and the Chief Executives' Group and Cumbria Leadership Board agreed that broadband is a top priority for all local authorities in the county. Every pound we can invest in broadband now will be crucial in attracting match funding from the private sector and other sources."

Cabinet member, Elizabeth Mallinson, continued: "I am thrilled that it has been agreed that the money will be put towards the Connecting Cumbria broadband project. This project is very important on a local level and is relevant to every single household, business and community in the county.

"Improving broadband availability for Cumbria means improving the quality of life for everyone who visits and lives in the county. I believe that the Performance Reward Grant has been allocated to the best possible cause."

Connecting Cumbria heads to Westminster

Cumbria County Council's Connecting Cumbria representatives have this month met with the Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP, government minister for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport.



Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt

Mr Hunt is responsible for the government department BDUK which awarded funding to Connecting Cumbria and three other national superfast broadband pilots.

The meeting has seen Cumbria County Council Leader Eddie Martin, Cabinet member Elizabeth Mallinson and Corporate Director Jim Savege fly the flag for Cumbria at a national level and show Cumbria's commitment to making this strategically important project a success.

They were joined by Penrith and the Border MP Rory Stewart, Rob Sullivan, Chief Executive of BDUK and representatives from the Department of Culture Media and Sport.

The county is now at the forefront of these pilots and the meeting was therefore an opportunity for Connecting Cumbria's representatives to share their experiences so that other pilot areas can learn from progress to date.

The meeting also enabled discussion around national policy issues which will be key to the future of the project, including European funding, 'state aid' and more.

Commenting on the meeting Eddie Martin said: "This was an important meeting for Cumbria. Having been chosen as one of the four national pilots for broadband, Cumbria is the most advanced in terms of progress. So we were really pleased that the Secretary of State wanted to meet with us to keep up to date with our progress and what opportunities and issues we are dealing with that have both local and national significance.

"The Secretary of State was really pleased with the approach we are taking and our progress, and we discussed how we can continue to push the project forward."

Elizabeth Mallinson said: "Connecting Cumbria is all about delivering superfast broadband for everyone in Cumbria – every resident, business, public sector organisation and visitor to our county.

"The meeting gave us the chance to update government on the excellent progress being made on this project in Cumbria especially how our innovative community led trials are going. What I'm most pleased about is the fact that it gave us the opportunity to tell him face to face about our ambition for Cumbria. The potential of this project is huge and if successful will benefit every single person who lives in or visits our amazing county."



Fra Cooke is in the hot seat

Fra Cooke has been elected as chair of the Hub Coordinators network across the county.

Here, Fra tells us about why he feels Connecting Cumbria is worthy of his time and energy.

Why did you get involved?

I'm not a techie person, but I am one of the joint editors of our village website in Patterdale. When Connecting Cumbria got underway in Autumn 2010, and communities were asked to nominate Broadband Champions, we website editors stepped forward.

We knew broadband was important for a whole range of users in our community, and that without some sort of campaign a part of our community would be without broadband for a long time to come. We joined the East Cumbria Community Broadband Forum to join up with and learn from other communities, and becoming a Hub Coordinator was the next step.

Why did you become Chair?

I felt that as someone with a commitment to community engagement, experience of chairing voluntary groups, and with no technical experience and no personal agenda to promote, I could make a contribution as Chair.

My family would say (with some justification) that I do a lot of things to avoid spending time with my numerous grandchildren!

WHO IS MY HUB COORDINATOR?

The full updated list of Hub Coordinators and their contact details are available online. Go to connectingcumbria.org and click on 'who's involved' for more information.

Get up to speed with Hub Coordinators

Hub Coordinators are one of the most important networks in the Connecting Cumbria project and Coordinator recruitment is continuing across the county.

In recent weeks new names have been added to the Coordinator list in Copleland, Allerdale, and South Lakeland.

These local people with an interest in broadband have given their backing and support to Connecting Cumbria in the most valuable way possible: by giving their time and commitment.

So, welcome to Rob Logan, Paul Pearson, Paul Doherty, Brian Kennish, Nick Troughton, Brian Crawford and Shirley Muir in Allerdale and Ian Topping and Elizabeth Phipps in Copeland. Together they bring the total number of Coordinators up to 33

Want to understand more about what Hub Coordinators do? Here's a quick guide to their role in the project.

What do Hub Coordinators do?

Hub Coordinators are a communication link between the Connecting Cumbria project and groups of local communities.

They are volunteers who meet every six weeks to be updated on the Connecting Cumbria project progress, share ideas and agree on common priorities. They have the key role of reaching out to all people in the community: households and businesses.

Hub Coordinators work with other volunteers in their community called Broadband Champions. These Champions will go door to door discussing broadband with people in the community and helping the Hub Coordinators raise awareness of the opportunities provided by broadband, the aims of the project and how it will progress over the coming months and years.

Hub Coordinators have two representatives on the Connecting Cumbria Partnership Board, and the six weekly meetings are also an opportunity for Hub Coordinators to hear what the Board is doing and make sure that their concerns and priorities are communicated to the Board.

What are the Hub Coordinator priorities?

Right now work is underway to make sure that all parishes or groups of parishes in Cumbria have a link to a named Hub Coordinator.

Over the next few weeks Cumbria County Council, with support from CALC and individual Hub Coordinators, will fill any remaining gaps so that Hub Coordinator coverage is complete by the end of the year. The Connecting Cumbria project will be delivered over a number of years, so it's important to get a robust structure in place.

A second priority is the development of a community engagement plan. Hub Coordinators and CALC are working together to develop a suggested activity plan for local communities and Broadband Champions to make use of in line with their own priorities and rate of progress.

Some communities have well-advanced engagement plans and benefit from enthusiastic broadband groups. Others, meanwhile, are at a much earlier stage of development.

The project aims to deliver high-speed broadband as widely as possible across Cumbria, but it is apparent that the level of potential demand may well influence the timing and reach of high speed connection, especially to our more remote communities.

A key part of the Hub Coordinator role is to support local community efforts to let people know what benefit high-speed broadband can bring, and in the process stimulate potential demand for the service as the Connecting Cumbria project begins in 2012.

Planning for the future

A meeting in Carlisle has seen Hub Coordinators and Parish Broadband Champions in the district come together to plan engagement with communities.

The meeting, which was well attended, included a session where attendees came together to discuss and begin to plan engagement in the parish clusters they represent for the next six to 12 months.

As part of this they heard from Aileen and Colin West from the Northern Fells group. The group has been a successful example of community engagement

regarding broadband.

Hub Coordinator Chris Drouet, who represents Orton, Cummersdale, Dalston and St. Cuthbert Without attended the event. He says: It's very early days but we're looking at ways to sell broadband to residents so that we can make delivering the last stretch of broadband in our area, as commercially viable as possible.

"Many people know the value of a superfast connection, but others still need more information to fully understand the benefits.

"We think the plans will be for our Parish Broadband Champions to get out and about and meet with residents and organisations but we will be looking at this in more detail over the coming weeks and months."

Warcop fibre walk a major success

A Warcop Parish Councillor and broadband campaigner Lindsey Annison has led a 'fibre walk' through the village and surrounding fields.

On the walk, those who are keen to bring superfast broadband at speeds of 100 megabits per second to the area, and rural parts of the county in general looked at the challenges of laying fibre optic cable through the village and surrounding area. Also present were residents, parish councillors, broadband consultants, fibre optic experts and many others.

Lindsey said: "We took a route through quite a typical Cumbrian landscape so that attendees could fully understand the kind of issues we need to be thinking carefully about when laying cable.

"We were really pleased by the diversity of the people who attended: parish councillors, residents, businesses and many more. It's reflective of the fact that we need to work together to make superfast broadband viable and sustainable."

For more information contact **Lindsey Annison** on l.annison@gmail.com.

Testing looks at bringing broadband to Cumbria

Projects exploring different ways to extend broadband in Cumbria's communities across the county are underway.

The projects are looking in particular at how to work with communities to deliver fibre-based solutions deep into Cumbria.

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), the government body responsible for awarding and overseeing the four national broadband pilots is supporting this work.

The East Cumbria Community Broadband Forum (ECCBF), a group of campaigners keen to get the best possible broadband connections, is one of the groups leading these projects. The Forum includes Great Asby, Northern Fells, Garsdale Dent Fibre Garden, Fell End, and Eden Valley Digital. Members of ECCBF have outlined their specific requirements for broadband to the companies shortlisted for the Connecting Cumbria project.

Also, in Grange and Cartmel, a group are developing a 'data book' aimed at informing potential broadband suppliers of local information such as the location of businesses and cabinets as well as the level of interest amongst residents.

Mike Kiely at BDUK says: "In their simplest form, the pilots which are planned will help show that there is a demand for fibre-based broadband into the least densely populated areas of the county.

"They will also involve communities contributing directly to the extension of the national broadband infrastructure, such as by laying cables across rural areas and negotiating wayleaves."

The lessons learned from the projects will feed into the development of the Rural Community Broadband Fund. This is a joint initiative by Defra and BDUK and is expected to provide up to £20 million in funding to projects in England. More details about this fund, including how to apply, will be announced later this year.

For more information contact **Mike Kiely** or **Robert Ling** at BDUK on mike.kiely@culture.gsi.gov.uk or Robert.ling@culture.gsi.gov.uk

Community news

Broadband makes bobbies on the beat better connected

Police officers on the beat will be getting easier, more secure access to emails and police files thanks to public sector partnership working between Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria County Council and the council's ICT provider Agilisys.

This initiative is a first step in meeting the Connecting Cumbria project's three aims which are to bring superfast broadband to homes; boost the economy; and make the county's public sector communications networks more cost effective and efficient. Although it uses existing technology, it demonstrates the potential to share

resources more effectively and increases the level of confidence that Connecting Cumbria will enable closer working and lower costs for councils, police, the NHS and GPs in Cumbria through improved data communications.





Cumbria County Council has nearly 90 Wireless Access Points around the county, and this recent step forward has seen the development of a new secure channel between these and Cumbria Constabulary's computer systems. It means police officers can use county council buildings to access information when they are out and

about, rather than having to return to their police station base, saving both time and traveling costs. Following a successful trial, the police are now in the process of rolling this out with officers.

Future developments will enable more public sector staff to access their networks from a host of public sector premises. A host of other cost and timesaving efficiencies will also continue as partnership working through the Connecting Cumbria project continues.

Speed ladder is an easy step to testing your connection

Connecting Cumbria aims to deliver superfast broadband to even the most rural areas of the county. In some places connections may be as high as 40 Mbps. Broadband speeds can be confusing, so here our simple speed ladder shows what a broadband internet connection can allow you to do. If you're unsure about what speed you are currently getting, please go online to connectingcumbria.org and follow the links to the broadband speed tester.

|  Internet connection speed |  Time to load a typical web page |  Time to download a typical five minute song |  Streaming video |
|--|--|---|--|
| 56k dial-up modem | 14 sec | 12 min 30 sec | Low quality |
| 256k broadband | 3 sec | 3 min | Low quality |
| 512k broadband | 1.6 sec | 1 min 30 sec | Low quality |
| 1Mb broadband | 0.8 sec | 41 sec | Medium quality |
| 2Mb broadband | 0.4 sec | 20 sec | Medium quality |
| 4Mb broadband | 0.1 sec | 5 sec | Medium quality |
| 6Mb broadband | Instantaneous | 3.5 sec | Medium quality |
| 8Mb broadband | Instantaneous | 2.5 sec | TV quality |

Connecting Cumbria Conference

In the last edition of this newsletter we told you about a Connecting Cumbria conference due to take place this November. This conference has now been postponed until spring 2012 when we will have more details and progress to share with you.

We would like to hear from you about what you would like to see on the agenda of a Connecting Cumbria conference, and whether you would be interested in getting involved with the plans as they develop. If so, please get in touch with us at connecting.cumbria@cumbria.gov.uk

For more information...

...about any element of the Connecting Cumbria project go online to: connectingcumbria.org