



Connecting Cumbria

through superfast broadband

March 2012



Welcome

These last few weeks have brought great news for Connecting Cumbria.

We've recently heard from the next generation of Cumbrians about their experience of superfast broadband and how they would like it to look in their future. The pupils had an extremely good understanding of broadband use, challenges we face as a county

and where we should be in the future. We look forward to schools continuing their involvement in the Connecting Cumbria project.

Progression of Technical Trials continues with Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and has continued to grow. All five pilots (Eden Valley District, Great Asby, Fell End, Northern Fells and Fibre Garden) have submitted business cases to DEFRA RCBF fund. We are now awaiting formal feedback from BDUK and DEFRA.

Following Cumbria County Council's decision not to take on the 'Cash Flow Partner' role on behalf of communities, guidance has now been issued to communities, sign-posting them to potential providers of this service.

In other news, the House of Lords Select Committee on Communications has announced an inquiry into the Government's superfast broadband strategy. The Committee has invited interested organisations and individuals to submit written evidence as part of the inquiry.

Public hearings are expected to be held up until June. The Committee aims to report to the House, with recommendations, before the summer recess. The report will receive a response from the Government and may be debated in the House. The Connecting Cumbria board will be keeping tabs on the development of this report and will continue to inform readers of any progress.

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

School children have their say on broadband in Cumbria

School children in West Cumbria have been given the chance to have their say on how they should think superfast broadband should look for Cumbria in the future.

Earlier this month the Connecting Cumbria Partnership Board took place at Nelson Thomlinson School, Wigton, giving school children the opportunity to present their views with regard to current broadband services in Cumbria and their aspirations for the future in terms of how they believe an improved service will improve the opportunities and services available to them.

Year 9 pupils from Nelson Thomlinson School, Wigton and Year 11 pupils from Stainburn School, Workington participated in presentations to the Partnership Board meeting. They shared how they see Superfast Broadband improving the lives of people, looking at how Cumbrians can improve business, industry, tourism and educational opportunities.

The presentations are now available to view at connectingcumbria.org.uk



Urban areas to receive broadband benefit

Connecting Cumbria has a strong focus on rural areas receiving superfast broadband, and we recognise that it's also important that broader Cumbria, including urban areas, are also an area for focus.

BT have announced that Carlisle, Wigton and other areas across Cumbria will benefit from broadband investment, benefitting approximately 48,000 properties in the county. In Carlisle, this will be rolled out to around 70 cabinets, covering a vast part of the city.

LEAG are now working with City Council and local MP John Stevenson to encourage local suppliers to get involved in superfast broadband provision in Carlisle.

The Connecting Cumbria Carlisle Partnership, Carlisle City Council and Carlisle College will be hosting a Carlisle – Superfast City Conference on Wednesday 30 May 2012.

The day will include a keynote speech from Dominic Campbell from FutureGov (a global expert in creative use of digital technology in the public sector) and comments from John Stevenson MP.

Workshops throughout the day will explore a number of digital themes including:

- The Connecting Cumbria project in Carlisle
- Digital inclusion and information technology in public services
- Improving connectivity for businesses and employment sites
- Engaging young people through social media

It will also provide a 'market place' for broadband providers and IT / digital solutions businesses to showcase their services and products and an opportunity for networking across the public and private and community sectors.

The event will take place at Carlisle College and is envisaged to last from 9.30 to 2.30



Roll out workshops hailed a success

This week hub co-ordinators from all over Cumbria and members of the Connecting Cumbria Partnership Board attended a 'roll out' workshop, which looked to identify issues that may arise during the implementation phase, and how we can factor those in to implementation planning.

Thirteen people signed up to the roll-out workshop following agreement at the Partnership Board that this would be beneficial

Councillor Liz Mallinson said: *"We've brought together everyone's expertise to formulate an implementation plan which not only makes sense, but has captured potential issues, so that we can tackle them at the earliest stage possible. This is a great example of joint working across the partnership and has been a great opportunity for hub co-ordinators to provide valuable input into the project."*

"Feedback will now be captured in a paper which we will then share with all partners on the Board for further input, and we will hold a further workshop to consider the feedback and refine the paper."

A similar workshop is to be held for county councillors shortly.

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Come along to the Connecting Cumbria Stakeholder event

The Connecting Cumbria partnership is holding a Stakeholder event in July. The purpose of the event is to raise the profile of the Connecting Cumbria project and update key stakeholders on what the project has achieved so far and what our next steps will be. It is also an opportunity for those of you with a common interest in broadband to network.

The event will see a variety of dignitaries speaking about their views on broadband in Cumbria. It will also be an opportunity for both our chosen supplier and Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) to talk directly to stakeholders about the aims and ambitions of the project and how they will feed into the process.

Stakeholders will also hear from CALC, hub co-ordinators and Chamber of Commerce, and there will also be an update on the pilot projects.

As well as this, it will also be an opportunity for the partnership to learn from stakeholders about how we can improve engagement and roll out the broadband plan in the most effective way. We'll also be asking key groups, such as parish councils and hub co-ordinators, what's working and what isn't, how they think we can improve communications and engagement, and how we can work to secure more community buy-in.

Key stakeholders and groups have been invited to the event and results will be published in this newsletter and on connectingcumbria.org.uk prior to the event.

Meet Margaret and Geoff, Allerdale's latest hub co-ordinators

Allerdale has two new hub co-ordinators in the Derwent parish. **Geoff Davies** and **Margaret Throp** look after a total of seven different parishes Above Derwent, Bassenthwaite, Borrowdale, Keswick, St John's / Castlerigg, Threlkeld and Underskiddaw Parishes. They have spoken to the Connecting Cumbria newsletter to tell us all about why they became a hub co-ordinator and what their priorities are for broadband in their area.



Why did you decide to become a hub co-ordinator?

We are both members of Above Derwent Parish Council and were asked to be Broadband Champions for the parish as we both have professional backgrounds in IT. It soon became clear that there was no Hub Co-ordinator in the Keswick area and we put ourselves forward because we did not want the district to lose out. The seven Derwent parishes are an established cluster for other purposes, so we thought that it was a useful unit for Connecting Cumbria purposes.

What are the big issues for you currently in terms of broadband in the county and your area?

Our area is probably typical of those within the National Park in that it is quite diverse. Keswick, for example, already has one ISP offering "up to 24 Mbps". On the other hand we have small settlements a long way up valleys that are surrounded by high fells. There is often no 3G signal in these places and landlines might not reliably deliver 1Mb/s.

How do you hope to see broadband in Cumbria in five years time?

We support the aspiration to deliver the possibility of connection to at least 25Mb/s to 90% of properties and want as many as possible of the properties in our parishes to be in the 90%. We would like even the most remote properties to be able to receive substantially better than 2Mb/s. We also recognise that symmetry of downstream and upstream will become increasingly important as, for example, increasing numbers of people want to use "cloud" solutions for backup and synchronisation of their data.

What has been the response in your communities so far?

A big challenge is persuading people that the 6 Mb/s available in the centres of villages such as Braithwaite and Threlkeld is not going to be sufficient in a few years as, for example, entertainment in the home or the guest house becomes increasingly internet-based. Engaging people can be time consuming and needs to be properly resourced and we hope that the connecting Cumbria project will provide strong leadership in this.

Stay connected!

There are lots of ways to get in touch with us and stay up to date with what's going on.

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