



Connecting Cumbria

through superfast broadband

September 2011

Welcome to the second newsletter



The county has been a hotbed of activity in recent weeks, as partners and communities continue to make progress in many elements of the project to deliver a minimum of two megabits per second of broadband across Cumbria.

Most recently, this week, the Partnership Board members met to discuss, amongst many other things a new brand – one that will capture the imagination and enthusiasm

of people across the county. I am pleased to announce that the project formerly known as Accessible Cumbria is now to be officially named 'Connecting Cumbria'.

July saw a very successful industry day held by the communities involved in the national Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) technical trials, who set out their proposals to a range of local and national broadband suppliers.

Meanwhile, the procurement process to select a supplier to deliver the main broadband 'backbone' across rural Cumbria is on track as prospective suppliers have been whittled down to three through this intensive process.

Together with council officers I have also recently met with MPs, MEPs, the Chief Constable, Hub Coordinators and residents in pilot areas to look at key issues around the project including the strategy, public sector reform through using broadband, and a bid for support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

I have also met with the county, district, parish, NHS, police and national park leaders who form the Cumbria Leaders' board: I was very pleased to hear that they have recommended to commit funding to the project. This money has been allocated by central government to Cumbria in recognition of excellent performance. Cabinet will be making the final decision on this grant later this month.

It is heartening to see such support for the project and that so many people are willing to work together for the collective good to get the best possible results from the project.

Finally, council officers have continued to meet with broadband providers outside of this project to seek to stimulate and secure private sector investment in broadband in the urban parts of Cumbria.

We will leave no stone unturned, and no opportunity passed by as we put our collective effort into securing the broadband that Cumbria needs, and will have.

Councillor Liz Mallinson

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

What is Connecting Cumbria?

The vision is...to deliver superfast broadband for everyone in Cumbria – every resident, business, public sector organisation and visitor to the county.

There will be connectivity so that every house and business in Cumbria has a choice of Internet Service Provider (ISP) and the cost to the consumer is no higher than for a similar level of service in the metropolitan areas.

Remaining bidders announced

The intensive procurement process to select a suitable supplier to deliver the technical elements of the Connecting Cumbria project is nearing its end, as a wide range of interested companies have been whittled down to three: BT Global Services, Cable and Wireless and Fujitsu.

The county council's ICT, legal, finance and procurement experts have all been involved in the process to find the right supplier. The final decision is anticipated to be taken by the county council's Cabinet members in December and the successful contractor will begin work in April 2012.

Councillor Liz Mallinson said: "This project is extremely important for Cumbria. Better broadband internet access to even the most remote areas will help make our county more economically prosperous and better connected.

Councillor Stewart Young, Cabinet Member with responsibility for procurement continues: "We have every confidence that whichever of the remaining three companies is chosen to work with us on this project will help identify the best possible solution to delivering broadband in the county."

"In a large rural county like Cumbria good communications are vital, and yet our mountainous landscape makes this difficult to deliver. This project aims to tackle that and make a connection which can deliver a minimum of two megabits per second of broadband available to every home and business."



Point of view

Councillor Ronnie Auld is the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) representative on the Connecting Cumbria Partnership Board and sits on the Carlisle District Hub Coordinator's Group as well as the county group.

Also Chair of Carlisle Parish Council's Association, Ronnie is an IT Consultant with particular interest in the food industry and the internet.

Why did you become involved in the broadband project?

There will be so many benefits accruing from a better broadband service in Cumbria – business opportunities, social networking, telemedicine and education – and it is a development I fully support. My role is about championing broadband to communities and parish councils, as well as representing their interests on the Connecting Cumbria Board.

What are the big issues for you, currently?

I'm part of a group working on the broadband engagement strategy: a huge task involving around 260 parishes, 2000 parish councillors and as many as 50 Hub Coordinators. It is a big team effort and I suspect that we will spend the winter helping parishes to engage with their residents and businesses so that they are ready to take advantage of developments when they occur.

What for you are the most exciting elements of Connecting Cumbria?

The challenge of working with a team of people on such a big engagement exercise. The county is full of enthusiasts and many have already made great progress, such as the Northern Fells Group which is a great example of how multi-parish engagement should work.

What do you think are the biggest challenges the project faces?

For me it is the challenge of community engagement, but the challenges vary for all the partners. The county council is in the middle of a procurement process and for them the challenge is in picking the best supplier and getting the contracts right.

Meanwhile, the chamber of commerce is engaging with businesses, as the preservation and development of rural business is a major driver for this project. Reaching out to Cumbria's 250,000 homes and 10,000 businesses is a huge task which cannot be undertaken by one single organisation.

What has been the response from the communities you work with so far?

Fantastic! Improving broadband (and providing it for the first time in some areas) has triggered a positive response everywhere.

The hardest part can be getting the pace right, as many communities want to do something now: These are early days and there are some very remote communities in Cumbria which will need a lot of help and support.

What is a Hub Coordinator?

A hub co-ordinator is someone with an interest in broadband who works with parish councils and communities. Their job is to engage with communities, get them involved and inform the overall project.

Find the Hub Coordinator for your area online at: cumbria.gov.uk/broadband

The long view

What happens after the contractor is chosen?

Raising awareness and engagement	Oct 2011
Contract negotiation and award	Oct 2011 – Jan 2012
Design, detailed planning and consultation	Jan–Apr 2012
Delivery	July 2012 onwards

Coming soon... Connecting Cumbria strategy

The strategy will set out a united approach from the partners involved in the Connecting Cumbria project to deliver superfast broadband in Cumbria.

A sub-group of the Connecting Cumbria Partnership Board has been established to progress development of the strategy which focuses on how to deliver broadband to even the county's most rural areas.

The draft strategy will go to all members of the Connecting Cumbria Partnership Board to allow them to consult with their stakeholder groups.

Look out for more details online at cumbria.gov.uk/broadband

Coming this November...

Connecting Cumbria Conference

Look out for details in future editions of this newsletter and online at:

cumbria.gov.uk/broadband

What can I expect from my current connection?

Things can be a little confusing when we're talking about internet connection speeds. Internet transfer speeds are measured in kilobits per second and megabits per second – these are not the same as kilobytes and megabytes used for hard disks and files. These figures show the kinds of speeds you can expect to do on the internet:

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 dial up modem	3 sec	3 min	Low quality
512k dial up modem	1.6 sec	1 min 30 sec	Low quality
1Mb dial up modem	0.8 sec	41 sec	Medium quality
2Mb dial up modem	0.4 sec	20 sec	Medium quality
4Mb dial up modem	0.1 sec	5 sec	Medium quality
6Mb dial up modem	Instantaneous	3.5 sec	Medium quality
8Mb dial up modem	Instantaneous	2.5 sec	TV quality

A **two megabits per second connection** means you can download a **five minute song** in around **20 seconds** or load a typical web page in less than half a second.

Just a click away...
cumbria.gov.uk/broadband

Cumbria County Council's new look broadband pages are now live!

Go online and find out more about the **Connecting Cumbria** project, check your broadband speed, and find out about what you can do with a two megabits per second connection.

You can also watch interviews, stay up to date with the latest news and frequently asked questions, and find the Hub Coordinator representing your area.



For more information...

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

cumbria.gov.uk/broadband