

## Keeping you up to speed with Superfast Essex

[www.superfastessex.org](http://www.superfastessex.org)

### **Why am I receiving this?**

Welcome to the fifth of our regular updates regarding the Superfast Essex programme. You are receiving this because you are an elected Council member, Essex MP, or a business or a resident who has signed up to be kept informed about the programme being rolled out across the county. These updates will be published about every quarter or so to give you an overview of what has been happening on the programme. They will also be added to our website, which we are keeping updated with the latest information.

### **The Superfast Essex story so far...**

In August 2013 Essex County Council (ECC) signed a contract with BT to improve broadband coverage across greater Essex and this became the Superfast Essex programme. It is part of a national government-led programme to improve broadband connectivity across the UK, Superfast Britain, which the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) is coordinating through a team called Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK).

BDUK, ECC and BT are jointly investing £24.6m into the current phase of the Superfast Essex programme. As part of the programme, the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) contract uses public subsidy to complement and accelerate the broadband offering by commercial operators.

The aim is to improve broadband coverage so that around 87 per cent of Essex has access to superfast fibre broadband by the end of 2016, as a result of this programme together with the commercial rollout. We want to ensure that a minimum of 2Mbps download speed is available across Essex, and that the fibre network - with the potential to provide superfast speeds of 24Mbps and above - is extended as much as possible with the available funding.

We are now planning Phase 2, aiming to extend superfast coverage in Essex up to 95% by the end of 2017.



## What's new?

Delivery update: We've reached our [next delivery milestone](#) - we are now one quarter of the way through our rollout programme! More than 100 green fibre broadband cabinets are now live and 20,000 homes and businesses in Essex are now enabled to access superfast broadband. Engineers have already laid enough spine fibre cable in Essex to complete a lap of the M25 and 10 laps of a running track - and the network is growing further still every day. So far nationally the [BDUK](#) programme has enabled 2million premises access to superfast broadband. The Superfast Essex [Postcode Checker](#) will continue to be updated to reflect the latest progress in delivery. Use it to find out if there has been any news for your area!

Coming soon: As part of Phase 1 we are carrying out a technical review of Exchange Only (EO) lines, where copper cabling connects a home or business directly to the telephone exchange, not via a cabinet in the street. Some areas where this happens are included in our rollout and we are finalising our plans for how we will upgrade these connections to fibre. The timescales are already in the plan, so please do consult our [Postcode Checker](#) if you think you are in an EO area. Planning and procurement for Phase 2 is under way. We expect to publish the first plans in Spring, so check back then for an update.

## Upcoming events

For businesses: We're hosting two sessions at the [Essex Means Business Project Europe Conference](#) on Thursday 26th February. Essex businesses of any size can [register to attend](#) until Monday 23rd February. We'll also be at [Business East 2015](#) in Colchester on Thursday 12th March.

For parishes: We're holding a [Countywide Parish Engagement Event](#) at the Essex Record Office on Wednesday 18th March for nominated representatives from all parish and town councils in Essex. We want to keep residents informed as best we can and would like to use this event to get local level input on what would work best for local communities, so please encourage your parish/town council to take up this opportunity. We will provide a brief update on the current programme, a little insight into the challenges with the rollout, and share how we expect to communicate about the Phase 2 plans and future updates to find out if this will meet communities' needs. There will also be the opportunity to ask any questions. Nominated representatives can [register here](#).

## Superfast Facts

- Superfast Essex is sponsoring the [Essex Digital Awards 2015](#) to celebrate digital successes in the county and ECC Director for Information Services, David Wilde, will join the judging panel.
- We're still keen for residents and businesses to register their demand through our online [Make the Connection Survey](#), so please tell your neighbours. NB: Each address will only be counted once.