

• Government Allocates £9m to WightFibre for Rural Broadband Rollout

Submitted by: WightFibre

Thursday, 3 March 2022

- Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme available to 17,000 homes on the Island
- WightFibre Gigabit Island Project now set to reach 78,000 homes and businesses on the Isle of Wight

Cowes, Isle of Wight, 3 March 2022:

Building Digital UK (BDUK) part of the Department for Digital, Media and Sport (DCMS), has allocated up to £9M of funding to WightFibre for its' Gigabit Island Project. The additional funding, available from the BDUK Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, will enable WightFibre to extend its' rollout to more rural areas of the Island.

Areas set to benefit from the voucher funding include Ventnor, Seaview, St Helens, Bembridge, Shalfleet, Yarmouth, Freshwater, Totland, Mottistone, Brightstone, Chale, Chale Green, Niton, Whitwell, Wroxall, Rookley, Newchurch, Winford, Alverstone Garden Village and Haven Street.

WightFibre's rollout will reach 60,000 homes by the end of 2022 with the remainder due to be completed by the end of 2023. Other homes which require landowner permission, for example private unadopted roads, may take longer if permission is not forthcoming.

John Irvine, CEO of WightFibre, said, "This is great news for the Isle of Wight. WightFibre's world-class, full-fibre network is delivering some of the best broadband in the world to the Island.

This will set the Island apart for decades to come. This BDUK voucher funding will allow us to reach even more premises to ensure no-one is left behind."

Councillor Julie Jones-Evans, Cabinet member for Regeneration, Business Development and Tourism, Isle of Wight Council also welcomed the news, "WightFibre's Gigabit Island Project is an important part of the Isle of Wight Council's Digital Island Strategy which aims to see as many premises as possible on the Island receive access to gigabit capable broadband. This is important for the Island's digital economy, will make the Island more attractive for digital businesses and will aid the Council's Regeneration programme".

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said: "Our voucher scheme is energising broadband firms such as WightFibre to build ultra high-speed internet infrastructure in the most hard-to-reach parts of the Isle of Wight. There is up to £9 million worth of vouchers available for homes and businesses on the Island and I'd encourage anyone looking for a broadband boost to apply."

Vouchers worth up to £1,500 for homes and £3,500 for businesses help to cover the costs of installing gigabit broadband to people's doorsteps. Vouchers are paid when a home or business is connected and are paid directly to WightFibre.

- Ends -

Note to Editors:

Background Note:

WightFibre is deploying a full-fibre broadband network to over 78,000 homes and businesses on the Isle of Wight which will make the Isle of Wight one of the best connected places in the world.

A description of the benefits of full-fibre broadband versus copper based broadband together with supporting graphics can be found here. www.wightfibre.com/full-fibre

WightFibre will inform households if they are eligible for the voucher scheme at the time they order service from WightFibre. Vouchers are paid directly to WightFibre to cover the cost of installing broadband to the property. More information can be found here. www.wightfibre.com/BDUK

Building Digital UK. The UK Gigabit Programme or 'Project Gigabit' is a £5 billion government infrastructure project that brings together everything the government is doing to enable and deliver fast and reliable digital connectivity for the entire country.

As part of this programme BDUK is launching phased contracts to those hard to reach parts of the UK that will need government support towards the cost of gigabit-capable broadband. This includes the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme

There is up to £210 million to give people in eligible rural areas immediate financial help to get gigabit-capable speeds. The scheme is accessible through broadband service providers that have registered to provide connections through the scheme.

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Pictures & Graphics:

John Irvine, CEO, WightFibre

WightFibre Logo

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About WightFibre.

Since 2001, WightFibre has owned and operated its' own telecommunications infrastructure entirely independently of BT Openreach. WightFibre provides phone, tv and broadband services to homes and businesses on the Isle of Wight. Only WightFibre is committed to building a full-fibre broadband network across the Island.

The WightFibre Gigabit Island Project will see full-fibre broadband deployed to over 78,000 homes and

business across the Island by 2023 and is already available to over 37,000 households. The scale of this significant civil engineering project is reflected in figures that show how 500 Kilometres of trenches will be dug, containing 5 million meters of duct and 750 million meters of fibre-optic cable as this full-fibre, ultrafast and future-proof broadband network continues to roll out across the Island, including areas not previously served by WightFibre. www.wightfibre.com

Those interested in receiving the new gigabit broadband services can apply online at www.wightfibre.com