



Dear Powys Community,

We are immensely grateful for your ongoing support and interest as we continue our endeavours to improve broadband connectivity across our county. This letter aims to provide an update on the significant progress made since our previous communication on 19th June 2023.

Broadway Partners: A Status Update

As you may be aware, Broadway Partners has recently experienced financial instability, with Teneo Financial Advisory Ltd assuming control of the company's operations from 31st May 2023. Despite these challenges, Broadway Partners continues to provide services to existing customers while actively seeking potential investors. Teneo anticipate the conclusion of this administrative phase by the end of July.

In parallel, Building Digital UK (BDUK) has retained several Broadway Partners' projects, designating them as Voucher Priority Area (VPA) eligible. This action, aimed at expanding our broadband network, makes these projects attractive to potential investors. However, the release of associated vouchers will occur only once residents confirm their service provision and contractual commitment with a new provider.

Progress and Challenges in Broadband Infrastructure Enhancement: Procurement Plans and Project Updates

The ongoing difficulties encountered by Broadway Partners have influenced BDUK's scheme to extend high-speed internet across a wider region. Broadway's contribution to the Open Market Review (OMR) had to be reassessed; however, we understand the procurement is now undergoing final review by the Cabinet Office. BDUK expects to commence an Open Public Review (OPR) in the coming weeks, an initiative targeting companies interested in enhancing broadband services across Powys and neighbouring parts of Ceredigion.

Under the umbrella of cross-regional framework procurement, Powys will be segmented into two Lots, 42C and 43C. These are included in the call-off elements alongside southeast Wales. We expect the procurement to start in the latter half of July, with the process extending until June 2024. The 'initial' scope for Lots 42C and 43C is projected to involve over 18,000 UPRNs (Unique Property Reference Numbers) at the Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage. This projection is yet to be confirmed and cannot be analysed until public release. We acknowledge that this figure is less than initially expected, possible reasons for which will be explained in the following sections.

(Please also note that the initial procurement package will exclude projects in Aberedw, Dwyriw & Manafon, Llangunllo, Llanafan Fawr & Llanwrthwl, Nantmel, Paincastle, and Rhayader, for reasons previously outlined related to the Broadway administration process, the combined projects account for approximately 3,400 UPRN's that will not be included in the initial procurement.)

Full Fibre Broadband Expansion: An Update

As the procurement process continues, BDUK have paused the issuance of Vouchers to new community projects. However, operators can still make progress on PACE (Premises Added by Commercial Extension) projects during this interim period. Both we and BDUK are strongly encouraging operators to seize this window of opportunity and apply for voucher-funded projects, independent of the broader procurement process.

Openreach maintains a steady commitment to the full fibre broadband expansion throughout Powys. Its commercial operation in Builth Wells is advancing at a steady pace, with projections indicating that the project will finish ahead of the originally estimated ten-month timeframe. Moreover, opportunities for full fibre expansion are taking place in Tregynon, Llanbryn-mair, and Kerry.

While it's important to note that the current phase of these schemes does not extend to all areas in Powys, we remain optimistic. We foresee the launch of additional campaigns and will share further information as soon as we are at liberty to do so.

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You are welcome to contact us in Welsh. We will respond in Welsh, without delay.



The Advent of SHE Technology

Openreach is deploying the innovative Subtended Headend Exchange (SHE) technology to extend its Full Fibre network to more isolated areas. This solution leverages the existing copper-based cabinet network to increase the reach of the new Full Fibre cables, offering connections to a larger number of premises.

However, it is important to note that SHE technology, while revolutionary, may not be applicable to all projects initially targeted by Broadway. We remain actively engaged in discussions with Openreach, particularly regarding those communities which lost their VPA status and for the remaining Broadway projects.

As always, our commitment is to keep you informed about these developments, and we look forward to sharing further updates with you. Our unwavering goal is to enhance the broadband connectivity in Powys and the surrounding areas, and we appreciate your patience and support in this endeavour.

Should you have any questions or require additional clarification, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at Broadband@Powys.Gov.UK

Yours Sincerely,

Mike Lewis

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