www.superfastlancashire.com

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Superfast Lancashire is an ambitious project which aims to deliver superfast broadband to 97% of Lancashire homes, business, schools, libraries and community facilities by 2015. This is a fantastic partnership between the County Council, BT, the 2 Unitary Councils and BDUK. Recent government announcements may well see additional investment, and an increase in the 97% coverage in Lancashire. However, we are keen to ensure all our residents can benefit from it.

SUPERFAST LANCASHIRE
COUNTYWIDE FIBRE BROADBAND

7 million people in the UK don't have access to the internet, of which 3.5 million are the most socially and economically disadvantaged in the country. The majority are likely to be older people, those in the lowest socio-economic groups and those living in deprived areas. **In Lancashire, 27% of households don't have access to the internet, and I in 5 adults don't have any IT skills at all.**

Having access to the internet opens up a wide range of opportunities, and is gradually becoming an absolute essential.

Rural Roll-out

Rural areas have previously felt excluded form the internet, and improvements to internet speeds. We're making sure all of our communities benefit from Superfast Lancashire. The first rural Superfast Lancashire cabinet was launched in Belthorn, Hyndburn. We heard from a local businessman who told us how this has completely transformed the way he can run his business, how he can now expand into other areas of work, and become far more competitive with overseas companies. Rural boradband cabinets are now becoming 'live' across the county.

Progress with Digital Inclusion

Digital Inclusion is quite a 'new concept', but is now becoming a crucial part of any organisation that provides services to the public. Government changes will soon mean any benefit claims have to be made online and it is already the norm to have to apply for jobs online. We have recently developed 4 objectives to help meet our aim of everyone in Lancashire being able to access online services.

1) **Improving Access** – Dealing with the availability and affordability of SFBB in private settings alongside design principles for inclusion purposes and wider public access of SFBB.

2) **Maximising the use of public sector assets** – potential to offer more efficient access to public services, responding to welfare reform, wider campaigns around digital technology, channel shift and the coordination of public sector activities.

3) **Improving Employability, Skills and Life Chances** – Looking at various aspects of employability through training provision, schools and work with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

4) **Enhancing Personal Wellbeing and Engagemen**t – Addressing wider public health issues, improved dissemination of information and personal wellbeing though digital technologies.

We have also selected some priority groups of people who we are working with to develop several pilot schemes before developing a larger framework to be used across the county. There are older people, unemployed and economically inactive people, and social housing residents,

> I have dealt with over 160 individual queries from (mainly) businesses across Lancashire about rollout in their area. We are working with BT to improve communication with county councillors. Just get in touch with any questions about rollout in your area, and ill get a full reply from BT.

And next…

❑ Lancashire County Council currently provides free access to all our residents in our local libraries. Although an excellent service, the computers are old, outdated, slow, and for many of the functions our residents are needing them for, unusable. These are due to be replaced this year which will make a massive difference to the people who rely on them. (Thank you Marcus)

❑ We have had a new Digital Inclusion section included on the Superfast Lancashire website. Here we explain what DI is, and provide resources to individuals and groups about basic It skills. This section will continue to grow.

❑ As more and broadband cabinets become live, we need to be made aware as and when they are switched on in our divisions. We are working with BT to improve communication between their operations people and all county councils so we can let our residents know they now have access to superfast broadband.

❑ I recently attended the GO-ON NW launch at Media City. GO-ON is a charity aimed at increasing digital inclusion across the UK. I will be meeting again with them shortly to discuss the possibility of establishing our own GO-ON Lancashire.

❑ Following a discussion with Manchester City Council, we are looking at increasing the number of IT Champions across the county. Manchester has run a very successful campaign and how has over 2,400 Champions across the city. I'm meeting with them shortly to see how we can use their experience to run a similarly successful campaign with our districts.