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184,000 MORE HOMES AND BUSINESSES IN THE NORTH WEST

TARGETED FOR SUPER-FAST BROADBAND

Fifteen more communities included in major expansion of BT's £2.5 billion

super-fast fibre broadband programme

More than 184,000 more homes and businesses across the North West are poised to benefit from super-fast broadband as part of a major expansion of BT's roll-out plans.

Aintree, Bootle, Churchtown, Great Crosby, Huyton, St Helens and Widnes in Greater Merseyside, Dalton-in-Furness and Kendal in Cumbria, Ardwick in Manchester, Cleveleys and Hesketh Bank in Lancashire, as well as Ashton-in-Makerfield, Hindley and Wigan are among the latest communities to be included in the company's £2.5 billion roll-out of fibre broadband.

It will take the number of North West homes and businesses being passed by the new super-fast network to more than 1.7 million.

The latest upgrades are due to be completed during 2012.

BT's local network business Openreach is driving forward plans to make super-fast fibre broadband available to two-thirds of UK premises by the end of 2014*. The innovative network features a mix of fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) and fibre to the premises (FTTP) technologies. Speeds are vastly superior to those previously available to many UK homes and businesses.

FTTC, delivered to street cabinets, currently offers download speeds of up to 40Mbps with 10Mbps upstream. Openreach has said it will roughly double these speeds next year. FTTP, where the fibre goes directly to homes and businesses, offers speeds of up to 100Mbps, rising to 300Mbps in the spring. This compares with 6.8Mbps, the average actual speed of all UK broadband according to Ofcom's latest research published in July 2011.

Mike Blackburn, BT's regional director for the North West, said: "This latest major investment is a tremendous boost for the region. Super-fast broadband will be welcomed by families throughout the area because it will help improve their quality of life and leisure and open new doors through online learning and fast access to information and services. And it's also going to provide a huge fillip for businesses and the local economy. At a stroke, small and medium sized firms will have access to big business speeds at much lower costs allowing them to find new markets, boost their competitiveness and create new jobs.

"Faster upstream speeds are a boon for flexible and remote working, slashing office overheads and improving employees' work-life balance. Large graphic and video files can be sent immediately online instead of being physically delivered to customers on hard disk. And high quality voice and video calls will enable businesses to save time travelling to clients without losing direct customer contact.

"We are making rapid progress with super-fast broadband across the UK. More than six million homes and businesses can now access the high-speed technology and last month we announced that two-thirds of UK premises will have access by the end of 2014, a year earlier than planned.

"And we're not forgetting the final third – largely rural areas which we have always said will require a partnership approach with the public sector to provide access to the new technology. BT has the strength and experience to deliver challenging projects – as we are doing with major faster broadband initiatives in Northern Ireland and Cornwall – and we are determined to be at the forefront of taking the technology to the final third. We're also testing new technologies to improve speeds where fibre broadband won't be available because it's important that as many homes and businesses as possible have access to fast broadband and its benefits."

Internet users with a fibre broadband connection can do much more online, all at the same time. A family can download a movie, watch a TV replay service, surf the net and play games online simultaneously. The latest chart hit can be downloaded in around two seconds, a CD in 30 seconds and a feature length HD film in 10 minutes.

Upload speeds are the fastest in the UK, with large video and data files being sent almost instantly and posting hi-resolution photos on Facebook, takes seconds.

Unlike other companies, Openreach offers network access to service providers on an open, wholesale basis, supporting a competitive market. For further information on

Openreach's super-fast broadband programme visit www.superfast-openreach.co.uk

Notes to editors

* BT's deployment plans are subject to an acceptable environment for investment.

Due to the current network topography, and the economics of deployment, it is likely that a small minority of premises within the selected exchange areas will not initially be able to be served by fibre-based broadband. However, Openreach is actively looking at alternative solutions for these locations.

Contact

For further information about this press release please contact Emma Tennant in the BT regional press office on 0800 085 0660. All our news releases can be read at www.bt.com/newscentre

About Openreach

Openreach is responsible for the last mile of the UK access network – the copper wires and fibre connecting homes and businesses to their local telephone exchanges. Openreach provides communications providers with services and products associated with that network.

About BT

BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications services and solutions, serving customers in more than 170 countries. Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to our customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband and internet products and services and converged fixed/mobile products and services. BT consists principally of four lines of business: BT Global Services, BT Retail, BT Wholesale and Openreach.

In the year ended 31 March 2011, BT Group's revenue was £20,076m with profit before taxation of £1,717m.

British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group plc and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.

For more information, visit www.btplc.com