Overview

The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme is improving digital connectivity across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to drive economic growth, help our communities to thrive and make it easier to access public services.

Led by Cambridgeshire County Council, the partnership programme is working with local councils, Government bodies, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, communities and businesses

Set up in 2011 with up to £23m investment by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, the programme is supported through a combination of public funding and private sector investment, and has successfully bid for additional Government and EU funding.
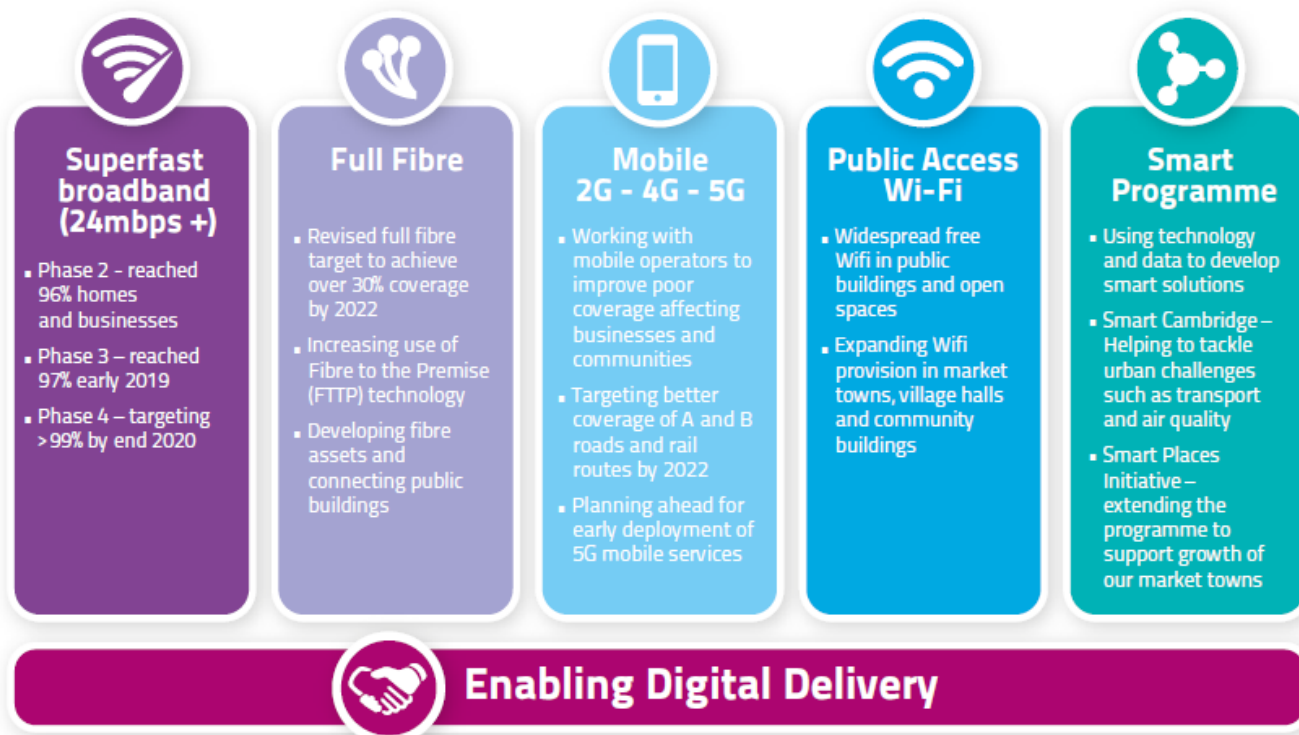
Having started with the superfast broadband rollout, the programme was extended in July 2018 with additional government, EU and CPCA funding of over £14m. The wider programme includes objectives to significantly improve mobile and public Wifi coverage, expanding the full fibre footprint and supporting development of 5G networks by 2022.

The Smart Programme is using emerging technology and data to address urban challenges such as transport and air quality in our cities and market towns.

The programme's new Enabling Digital Delivery (EDD) service is working with telecoms providers and mobile operators to remove the barriers to the rapid delivery of digital connectivity, make best use of public sector assets and attract private sector investment.

The key targets for the Connecting Cambridgeshire Digital Connectivity are shown below with brief updates summarised overleaf.

Digital Connectivity Programme for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2018-2022

Superfast broadband (24mbps +)
- Phase 2 – reached 96% homes and businesses
- Phase 3 – reached 97% early 2019
- Phase 4 – targeting >99% by end 2020

Full Fibre
- Revised full fibre target to achieve over 30% coverage by 2022
- Increasing use of Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) technology
- Developing fibre assets and connecting public buildings

Mobile 2G - 4G - 5G
- Working with mobile operators to improve poor coverage affecting businesses and communities
- Targeting better coverage of A and B roads and rail routes by 2022
- Planning ahead for early deployment of 5G mobile services

Public Access Wi-Fi
- Widespread free Wifi in public buildings and open spaces
- Expanding Wifi provision in market towns, village halls and community buildings

Smart Programme
- Using technology and data to develop smart solutions
- Smart Cambridge – Helping to tackle urban challenges such as transport and air quality
- Smart Places Initiative – extending the programme to support growth of our market towns

Enabling Digital Delivery

The Digital Connectivity Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough can be viewed on the Connecting Cambridgeshire website at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

Programme updates

Superfast broadband
The superfast broadband rollout has reached over 126,000 homes and businesses that would not be able to access it otherwise. Openreach has been awarded the contract for a fourth phase of the broadband rollout to cover 5,300 more homes and businesses in harder to reach rural areas over the next two years following a competitive procurement process.

Remaining premises (estimated to be less than 1% c4000) will have a range of options to secure faster internet access, including the Government's Gigabit Vouchers and Better Broadband schemes, and Openreach's Community Fibre Partnerships.

Take-Up
Take up of superfast broadband is approaching 63% - among the highest in the country - which has enabled over £10m contract 'clawback' funding to be re-invested in the rollout. A Take-Up campaign in early 2019, funded by DCMS, proved very successful and highlighted the increasingly availability of Fibre to the Premise (FTTP).

Full Fibre
The County Council is leading the way nationally, having agree an ambitious new target to achieve over 30% full fibre coverage across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2022, ahead of the Government target as part of plans to make innovative use of the Council's assets to deliver better connectivity.

This supports Cambridgeshire's position as a leading digital county with the fastest growing economy in the UK. Rapid progress in technology means future-proof full fibre networks are vital to improving fixed, mobile and wireless connectivity, which is needed to underpin the local economy, deliver public services and support thriving communities.

Mobile
Variable mobile network coverage is causing widespread concern amongst businesses and communities across the region. The programme aims to improve network coverage so that people can make reliable mobile phone calls and use 4G across the whole geography of the county, including A and B roads, and rail services by 2022.

Findings from a technical mobile phone coverage survey for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, commissioned by the County Council, are being analysed in conjunction with the latest Ofcom data as a base line for the programme's mobile coverage improvement plan. The data will inform discussions with mobile operators, landowners, businesses and communities to improve access for infrastructure and broker solutions with an initial focus on 'not spot' areas.

Public Access Wifi
Plans are underway to extend Public Access Wifi to market towns and more rural community buildings across the county, to help people access online services and support community wellbeing.

Smart Programme
The Smart Places initiative using data and emerging technology in smart ways to support Market Town Masterplans has been trialled in St Neots and is being extended to other areas.

It builds upon the innovative work of the Smart Cambridge programme, which is focused on the Greater Cambridge area, using funding from the Greater Cambridge Partnership, Government and industry to develop projects including trialling autonomous shuttles on the Busway to supplement public transport out of hours, and providing real-time information to encourage more sustainable travel.

Contacts
Connecting Cambridgeshire has produced a quick guide to help Members respond to residents' queries about broadband, mobile or WiFi coverage. If you have a query, please contact the Connecting Cambridgeshire team by email: contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk or call 01223 703293