



Connecting Dartmoor & Exmoor – Q & A's

What is Connecting Dartmoor & Exmoor?

Connecting Dartmoor and Exmoor (CDE) is a programme to deliver superfast broadband using wireless technology to some of Dartmoor and Exmoor's most remote rural areas. The programme is led by Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) working with the National Park Authorities and delivery partner Airband Community Internet.

Overall, it will deliver improved broadband speeds to some 5,800 homes and businesses through fixed wireless access networks for Dartmoor and Exmoor and is anticipated to extend superfast broadband to 96% of premises within its area.

How does this fit with Phase 1 of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme?

The first phase of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme will increase superfast broadband availability to around 90% of homes and businesses in Devon & Somerset, by the end of 2016. This phase is being delivered by BT Group using a fibre connection.

Through Phase 1 the National Park Authorities and CDS worked in partnership to secure an additional £700,000 of funding to extend the initial reach within the National Parks. This combined with the phase 1 core programme, is expected to extend superfast broadband to around 75% of premises on Dartmoor and 69% on Exmoor.

And how does it fit with CDS Phase 2?

CDS secured further Government-matched funding, giving the programme an extra £45 million to invest in extending superfast broadband as phase 2 of the CDS programme. This is the largest amount allocated to any local broadband programme in England.

In recognition of some of the unique challenges presented by Dartmoor & Exmoor, a separate open procurement exercise to find a delivery partner for the two National Parks was undertaken in 2015, supported by Dartmoor & Exmoor National Park Authorities. This forms the Connecting Dartmoor and Exmoor programme.

Procurement for phase 2 across the rest of the CDS area began in July 2016 when the open tender was issued.

Where?

Connecting Dartmoor & Exmoor covers the same area as that encompassed by the National Park boundaries.

Who are Airband?

Based in Worcester and founded in 2002, Airband Community Internet is a specialist in high speed wireless broadband for rural areas. Airband is using local specialist companies such as South Hams Aerials to undertake the installation of antenna on premises to receive the superfast service.

What is fixed wireless technology?

Airband will be delivering superfast broadband using wireless technology, similar to Wi-Fi. This works by passing a signal from a radio on a transmitter or mast to a radio attached to the final building. A cable then takes the connection into the building allowing the end-user to connect to the internet the same way as via fibre or an ADSL connection.

Aside from its flexibility, the other main benefit of fixed wireless is that there is no need to dig up roads and lay cables to connect with the exchange points. In addition, fixed wireless has the added advantage of quicker deployment times and lower install costs.

The end user experience of those using the wireless technology is very similar to that experienced by those using a fibre connection, including the ability to use Virtual Private Network, VOIP (e.g. Skype) and real-time online gaming.

When is it rolling out?

The network went live in August 2016 for the first areas on Dartmoor. Areas such as Ilsington, Scorrington, Haytor, South Brent, Bittaford and Cornwood are now live and many further areas will be going live over the next few months.

Is there any impact on the landscape?

The networks will include radio transmitters on a range of structures including existing commercial masts, new timber telegraph poles and buildings. Airband has considerable experience in introducing these into the landscape sympathetically with little visual impact and has worked closely with planners and specialists at both the National Park Authorities to achieve the best possible network solution for our protected landscapes.

Are there any health implications?

There has been considerable research done into this question and all the evidence has shown that there are no links between radio waves and problems with health. In fact in a study by WHO they found that the body absorbs up to 5 times more of the signal from FM radio and television than from fixed wireless base stations such as Airband will be using. To find out more visit their report [HERE](#).

What is the difference in service between fibre, fixed wireless and satellite?

Superfast Broadband can be delivered using a fibre connection accessed via a standard telephone land line. The Airband fixed wireless system will also deliver superfast speeds of at least 30 MB/s for the majority of premises. Like fibre, Airband's fixed wireless technology has no problems with latency (delay) on the connection. A satellite system has to bounce the internet signal up to space and back again, the longer the length of time the radio waves take to travel cause issues with latency which make it more difficult to use satellite broadband to play action games or applications that need instant transmission.

Do I have to get my service direct from Airband?

No, all other service providers are able to use the fixed wireless network to offer a superfast service / package to customers. Other subscription service providers currently offering a service include SW Comms, Torbay Telecom, Carrier Wales and Moortec as well as the retail arm of Airband.

What if I still can't get a superfast service?

'Connecting Dartmoor and Exmoor' is being delivered as part of Phase 2 of the Connecting Devon & Somerset project. The remainder of the CDS area is now the subject of an open procurement to deliver Phase 2. CDS are actively seeking funding for a third phase.

Talk to us

If you have any queries, please do get in touch and ask us, either by email or by picking up the phone and giving us a call.

- For more information about the Connecting Dartmoor & Exmoor programme, contact Matt Barrow, Stakeholder Engagement on 01392 382221 or via matt.barrow@devon.gov.uk or visit <http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/dartmoorandexmoor/>
- For Dartmoor enquiries, phone Jo Rumble, Communities Officer on 01626 832093 or via jrumble@dartmoor.gov.uk or <http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk>.