



HAS
**SUPERFAST
BROADBAND**
REACHED YOU?



Connecting the hardest to reach rural premises

Superfast Essex is one of 44 Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) projects across the country, aiming to provide 95 per cent of premises in Essex with superfast broadband by 2019. As part of the programme, councillors from Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council have launched the Superfast Essex Rural Challenge Project in a pilot area to bring faster connectivity to some of the hardest to reach rural areas in Epping Forest District, in partnership with ultrafast broadband provider Gigaclear.

The pilot project is one of the options which may be considered to help the remaining five per cent of the county access faster broadband. The Superfast Essex team wanted to test alternative ways of bringing superfast connectivity to rural communities and businesses.

They searched for broadband solutions to provide access to areas currently out of reach for mainstream options – or where their size enabled them to be more agile. They partnered with Gigaclear, one of a growing number of alternative network providers in the UK, which is now installing its pure fibre cable network directly to over 4,500 homes and businesses, providing internet speeds of up to 1000Mbps: 1,000 times faster than currently available in the area and 40 times faster than the UK average.

Gigaclear has invested £5.5 million in the Rural Challenge Project with £2 million of public funding from Essex County Council, BDUK and Epping Forest District Council.

Case study: **Superfast Essex, Essex and Epping Forest**

The first phase of the pilot project, awarded to Gigaclear in June 2015, will be rolled out by May 2016, providing fibre-to-the-premises technology to villages and rural communities across 18 parishes in the east of Epping Forest District. The first customer, from Bobbingworth, was connected to the network in December 2015 just a month after work started.

Councillor Penny Channer, who is also the Chairman of the Superfast Essex Steering Board, said: "It is great to see the plans for our rural pilot project starting to come to life. This will make a tremendous difference to residents and businesses in this area. Credit to the team for getting the project off to a good start. I look forward to more customers seeing the benefit."

Councillor Alan Lion said:
"This project is a milestone for the area. Installing this ultrafast technology from Gigaclear will make a momentous change to the work and home lives of residents as the network goes live. We're excited for the possibilities this creates and looking forward to seeing these rural communities thrive as a result."

Resident Dr Nicholas Venditti, one of the first residents to benefit from the Rural Challenge Project said: "Our daughter is a medical student and our son is currently doing his A-Levels so it is vital they are able to have reliable and fast access to the internet in order to do their homework and university studies. My wife and I both work from home so it is really going to revolutionise things for us. Previously our broadband used to drop off all the time, so this will make a huge difference in our lives. Our house is one of the oldest in the village, so much so that we have no mains gas or drainage but we do have the best broadband in the country now."

Matthew Hare, Chief Executive at Gigaclear, said: "By installing a new fibre-to-the-premises network we are giving residents and businesses in the Epping Forest District internet speeds that will transform their online experience, meaning working from home, running a business, studying, being entertained and play will now be possible for all. Living in a rural area doesn't mean you have to tolerate bad broadband, and we're here working with the Superfast Essex team and Epping Forest District Council to futureproof communications within the Epping Forest District."

For more information visit
www.superfastessex.org/ruralchallenge