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**£250m boost taking Superfast Broadband further and faster**

 An extra £250m of Government money for superfast broadband will help business start-ups and job creation in some of the UK’s hardest to reach rural areas, Culture Secretary Maria Miller, announced today. The nationwide rollout is a key part of the Government’s long-term economic plan to secure Britain’s future by providing access to superfast broadband, and in allocating funding the Government has worked to ensure as many families and businesses as possible benefit.

Local projects around the UK will now receive additional funding from a £250m pot, with the hardest to reach locations amongst those who stand to benefit most. This funding is in addition to the £1.2bn already invested by central and local Government and will ensure 95% of UK homes and businesses have access to superfast broadband by 2017.

Indicative funding for nations is as follows:

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| England | £184.34m |
| Wales | £12.11m |
| Scotland | £20.99m |
| Northern Ireland | £7.24m |

The current rural programme will deliver returns of £20 for every £1 invested, representing tremendous value for money. As well as improvements in the productivity of broadband enabled firms, faster broadband will create an additional 56,000 jobs in the UK by 2024, and the work involved in the current roll out is expected to provide a £1.5 billion boost to local economies, with approximately 35,000 job-years created or safeguarded over the period to 2016. By 2024, the Government’s current investments in faster broadband will be boosting rural economies by £275m every month, or around £9m every day.

Over 10,000 homes and businesses are now gaining access each week, with this figure expected to reach 40,000 per week by summer this year. There are strong economic growth and efficiency reasons why local authorities should contribute towards to the cost of rolling out superfast broadband, and the additional £250m will be awarded on a match funding basis.

Superfast broadband allows families to use multiple devices simultaneously, so while parents are streaming a movie or their favourite television programme, the kids can be uploading photos and videos to social media sites whilst downloading the latest track from their favourite artist. Businesses also stand to benefit hugely from the roll out, which will facilitate video conferencing, boost processing power and increasing productivity.

Culture Secretary Maria Miller said:

“Superfast Broadband will benefit everyone - whether they need it for work, to do homework or simply to download music or films. Thousands of homes and businesses now have access and it is helping people with their everyday tasks. We want to make sure that Britain is one of the best countries in the world for broadband, and the extra £250m we are investing will help ensure communities around the UK are not left behind in the digital slow lane.”

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said:

“This government’s long-term economic plan is accelerating the roll-out of superfast broadband, to help narrow the digital divide and boost local growth. We are offering additional central government funding to councils who want to work with us to help increase internet speeds for their local residents and local firms.”

Cllr Flick Rea, Chair of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board at the LGA said:

"Councils are committed to improving internet services for residents and business to help drive forward growth in their areas and this announcement of further funding is a positive step to build on the good work that has already been done locally to build better connected communities. We look forward to working with the Government on the roll-out of the schemes in the areas that are receiving funding.”

Government also recently committed £10m to look at ways to reach those areas in the “final 5 per cent”. Potential technologies that could be piloted under this fund include:

* Using 4G mobile signal to deliver ‘fixed wireless’ superfast broadband’.
* Using fibre direct to premises.
* Taking fibre from broadband cabinets to a distribution point further down the network, increasing speeds by reducing the reliance on copper.
* Satellite technology.

The fund will open on 17 March 2014 and we are asking local authorities to offer support to these pilot projects.

**Additional information:**

* Map showing progress of local broadband projects <http://bit.ly/HV5M1n>
* Graphics to highlight benefits of superfast broadband <http://bit.ly/1eUnlMT>
* Sound clip of Culture Secretary, Maria Miller, talking about extra funding. <https://audioboo.fm/boos/1947604-maria-miller>

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**Notes to Editors**

1. ***Superfast Britain*** is a Government programme of investment in broadband and communication infrastructure across the UK. Run by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, this investment helps businesses to grow, creates jobs and will make Britain more competitive in the global race. The portfolio is comprised of three elements:
* £790m to extend superfast broadband to 95% of the UK by 2017
* £150m to provide high speed broadband to businesses in 22 cities
* £150m to improve quality and coverage of mobile phone and basic data network services

Administered on behalf of Government by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), Superfast Britain is transforming Britain by promoting growth, enabling skills and learning, and improving quality of life.

For further information: <https://www.gov.uk/broadband-delivery-uk>

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