



Better Broadband Solutions for Powys

Arwain Pilot Programme

BROADWAYPARTNERS



The main project objectives were:

- *To identify a selection of business and residential premises from the “white premises” list for Powys; being those premises with poor broadband that aren’t included in the next roll out of superfast broadband, for a pilot project.*
- *To identify technology/multiple technologies that would resolve the broadband issues.*
- *To support the businesses/residents to apply for UK and Welsh Government or other funding, through to implement of the solutions.*

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest

In November of 2020 the tender for *Better Broadband Solutions for Powys* was awarded to Broadway Partners. To get the project running the Arwain team contacted every town and community council in Powys of which there are over 100 to invite them to express an interest in potentially being one of the pilot areas which was looking at improving broadband in communities.

Throughout November 2020 over 30 expressions of interest were received from town and community councils across the county. These expressions of interest were passed onto Broadway Partners for them to complete a more in depth analysis.

Stage 2: Analysis

An analysis was carried out for each area that responded, looking specifically at the connectivity in each local council area to see what kind of broadband speeds properties were receiving. The aim of this exercise was to identify communities where connectivity had the most challenges and would thus be most impacted by the project.

In January 2021, Broadway Partners presented their analysis to Powys County Council which including their Community Broadband Officer. Looking at the submissions along with the analysis two communities were chosen. The two-pilot area for the project were:

- Dwyriw & Manafon (2 submission combined as one project)
- Aberedw

Stage 3: Getting Started

Powys County Council and Broadway Partners met with the representatives of Dwyriw & Manafon and Aberedw on separate Zoom calls, to start the implementation of the project in each area. It was agreed that each area would setup a working project group to help steer the project in both areas. Dwyriw & Manafon has representatives of both community councils, the county councillor, and a passionate members of the public. Aberedw had representatives from the local community councils, the county councillor, and a passionate members of the community.



Stage 4: Defining the Scope

With both project groups established, Broadway Partners worked with them separately, to define the scope of the individual projects. The natural starting point was the community council boundaries and looking to bring the opportunity of fibre to the premises of all properties, within the boundary. The Aberedw project group made some alterations to remove an area that had no properties located within and then extend the scope to cover two remote connectivity challenged areas, on the neighbouring Glascwm Community Council area. Dwyriw & Manafon made an alteration to bring in a small group of properties just to the south of Manafon.

Stage 5: Gauging Interest

With the scopes defined it was time to embark on a key stage to check the projects viability. In order to justify the build of the network the next step was to engage with the community to see what interest there was. With both project groups, planned marketing strategies, personalised for each community was developed. This included banners, posters, Facebook pages and most importantly a direct mail to every single property within each community. The letters were drafted by the project groups themselves, making them personal and specific to their communities with the aim to explain the opportunity. Within the letter there was guidance directing the recipient to register their interest, if any, with no commitment. Broadway Partners were looking for roughly 30% of the properties within the scopes to register interest to signal a viable project. Once a viable level of interest had been achieved, a funding application would be submitted to the UK Gigabit Voucher Scheme, to build a fibre to the premises network.

Stage 6: The Results

The marketing started in March 2021 and achieved the following interest:

- Aberedw Properties Registered: 134/240 (56%)
- Dwyriw & Manafon Properties Registered: 173/461 (38%)

Stage 7: Funding Application

Funding applications were submitted to UK Government by Broadway in 2021 and were approved in Autumn of the same year. Broadway Partners do not get paid any funding until properties have been connected so no voucher money has yet been given to Broadway to date (November 2022).



What has happened since?

The projects have gained momentum particularly in the latter months of 2022.

UK Gigabit Voucher Pledging - At the start of 2022, properties that had registered interest were asked to pledge their UK Gigabit Voucher to Broadway, which is a confirmation that they would like to be connected as part of the scheme.

Surveys – A prebuild network survey was completed of every Openreach Telegraph pole and Underground Duct across each project area, as Broadway are able to use these as part of their network build. These surveys were to identify works that need doing before the fibre is run across the areas.

Network Designs – Once the survey was completed the network designs started to create a detailed network plan. These have both now been completed.

Cabinet (Mini Exchanges) – the cabinet (mini exchange) for Aberedw was installed in October 2022 and Dwyriw & Manafon will have 2 cabinets installed before the end of 2022.

The network builds across both pilots are due to begin before the end of the year 2022, with build completion expected in Spring of 2023.

Toolkit

A separate toolkit is available on 'How to start a community broadband scheme'

For more information please contact:

Powys County Council Community Broadband Officers

Email: broadband@powys.gov.uk

Website: [Contact the Community Broadband Officer - Powys County Council](#)

