

“The Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire superfast broadband project has already enabled 14,140 premises to receive fibre broadband and is on track to deliver 91.1% superfast coverage by March 2016. A further £6.63m has been allocated for Phase 2 of the project to extend superfast coverage to up to 96.6% of premises in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire by December 2017”.

As the supplied quote states, the Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire project is seeking to enable over 90% of the county’s premises by early 2016, with further funding in place to provide significant additional coverage beyond this. To provide some additional clarity, the project has now enabled 17,264 premises with delivery exceeding targets, and have ambitions to deliver beyond the currently stated target of 96.6% and make Hertfordshire one of the most widely-covered counties in Britain.

However, this is the full County Picture and the rollout of broadband in East Herts has not been as extensive as we would have hoped, due to the relative scale and cost of the investment required in this area. Looking forward, the additional funding now secured will allow the programme to increase the coverage in East Herts in particular. We hope for work to begin in East Herts as soon as the second phase begins in early 2016, and will make more information available as soon as contractual commitments have been agreed in 2015.

It should also be noted that December 2017 remains a target date only for the end of project at this stage. Until we have seen supplier responses, it is not clear whether BT will be able to deliver to this deadline (although we very much hope that this will be the case).

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The above reply was written as a response to a written parliamentary question I asked the Department for Culture Media and Sport about rural superfast broadband. The full text of that question is below:

*Q: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the speed of delivery of superfast broadband to rural areas in East Hertfordshire.*

*A: The Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire superfast broadband project has already enabled 14,140 premises to receive fibre broadband and is on track to deliver 91.1% superfast coverage by March 2016. A further £6.63m has been allocated for Phase 2 of the project to extend superfast coverage to up to 96.6% of premises in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire by December 2017.*