Frequently Asked Questions

I'm interested in creating a community broadband project. Where do I start?

Check out the CBS website at www.communitybroadbandscotland.org From there, you can make an enquiry and someone from your local advisory team will get in touch with you.

How is CBS funded?

CBS is funded through both core Scottish Government funds as well as receiving financial support from the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

What help can I expect from CBS?

CBS will work with you to determine the current level of connectivity in your area. If there are postcodes in your area that are not being served by a commercial provider or your area is not in the scope of the DSSB programme, we will support you to investigate the potential of creating your own community broadband network.

Working with a locally-based CBS adviser, we will help you to understand the various technical options, develop a potential business model and where appropriate, we will help you to procure a supplier for your broadband network. We will continue to work with you for some time after the completion of your project to ensure your network continues to run smoothly.

What speeds can I expect from a community broadband project?

Wherever possible, a CBS project aims to deliver Next Generation Broadband speeds (sometimes described as superfast), which is defined as above 30mbps to 90% of users at peak times.

Given that CBS works with communities in some of the most remote, rural and geographically-challenging areas of Scotland, there are many different factors that can affect the speed a subscriber will receive. These can include the nature of the topography or the quality of the link to the main connection line, often referred to as backhaul.

How do I know that the technology CBS funds is robust and reliable?

CBS funds a team of technical experts that will look at your community's unique requirements and ensure that the technical solution proposed is as robust and secure as it can be.

What technologies are used in a community broadband project?

The technologies employed for a CBS project vary depending on local circumstances as well as what represents best value for money. Often, the technologies used tend to be microwave wireless transmitters and receivers. In exceptional cases, fibre to the premise (FTTP) is used.

How do I know if my community is eligible for a community broadband project?

Check out www.communitybroadbandscotland.org and use our online form to make an enquiry. From there, a locally-based CBS adviser will get in contact with you.

What's the difference between DSSB and CBS?

Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) are responsible for providing Next Generation Broadband to 95% of Scotland by the end of 2017. They work in partnership with BT to roll-out fibre across Scotland.
Community Broadband Scotland (CBS) works with the communities within the remaining 5% who will not benefit from the main-fibre roll out and help them to tackle their own connectivity issues by creating their own community broadband solutions.

What postcode areas are covered in a CBS project?

Any postcodes that will not benefit from the main DSSB programme in a particular area have the potential to be served by a community broadband project. Additionally, postcodes where the full number of premises who are not due to get speeds above 24mbps can also be considered.

How do I know a community broadband solution is future-proofed?

Any network funded by CBS must be future-proofed. You will be supported to ensure this by a team of technical experts which CBS will fund as well as ensuring there is enough money available in the on-going operation of the network so that continual improvement and upgrade is possible.

Does my community have to build the network?

When considering a CBS-funded broadband solution, there are many choices available to your community, from a community self-build to a supplier design, build and operate. See our helpful guide, 'Your Choices' for more information.

Jargonbusting

Activation
Activation is the process by which your existing phone line becomes enabled to receive data over the internet and telephone calls simultaneously. The activation takes place at your local phone exchange.

Backhaul
The high capacity link that connects a sub network (community) to the internet core network. In most small communities, connections will be aggregated at a single point, usually the local telephone exchange.

Bandwidth
The maximum speed of data transfer across an internet connection.

Broadband
A term used to describe internet that is always on, high speed, and significantly faster than earlier dial up technology. Broadband can be delivered through telephone, cable, wireless or satellite technology.
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Dial-Up
Dial-up uses the telephone line to establish a connection to the internet. Dial up can typically reach speeds of up to 56kbps. In contrast to broadband, the telephone line cannot be used to make and receive calls whilst connected to the internet.

Download speed
The speed at which a user is able to download (transfer) data from the internet to their computer/device.

Exchange
A building that houses electronic equipment to connect telephone calls. Backhaul ends here and the access network begins.

FTTC
Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) services are being rolled out by BT as their Next Generation Broadband platform. This replaces the existing copper connection between the exchange and the green street cabinet with fibre. This means there is a shorter length of copper between the customer and the high speed fibre network which means faster connections can be provided.

FTTP
Fibre to the premises (FTTP) – this is where fibre is laid directly to the property.

ISP
An internet service provider (ISP) is a company that provides a broadband service.

Latency
The time delay caused by the distance a broadband signal has to travel. High-latency is encountered with satellite broadband, caused by the long distances (up to a satellite and back) that the broadband signal has to travel. This can limit the use of many real-time applications such as gaming.

Mast
Masts are powerful radio transmitters and receivers which allow mobile phones and computers to connect to the internet or mobile phone networks.

Mbps
Mbps stands for megabits per second, and is a measure of the speed of data transfer (1 megabit per second = 1000 kilobits per second)

Next Generation Broadband
Next Generation Broadband (NGB) is high speed broadband that exceeds the capabilities of copper-based broadband infrastructure. Speeds vary depending on the technology used (satellite, fibre, wireless etc). The European Commission's Digital Agenda sets 30Mbps as a minimum target for NGB speeds. Scottish Government, under their Step Change programme, want to see significant uplift in speeds, with 85-90% of premises getting 40-80Mbps by the end of the 3 year programme.

Satellite Broadband
Broadband services delivered through a satellite that communicates with a computer (or computers) through a satellite dish on the premises.

White area
An area where there is no broadband infrastructure and where no such infrastructure is likely to be developed in the near future (taken to mean three years). These locations are eligible for public subsidy under EU state aid guidelines