



CONNECTING CHESHIRE UPDATE

RDPE Rural Community Broadband Fund Launched

DEFRA have just launched the Rural Community Broadband Fund and it is open for communities covered by the Connecting Cheshire partnership to access.

The Rural Community Broadband Fund (RCBF) has been set up to enable communities within the remaining 10% 'hard to reach' areas to establish Superfast Broadband services over and above the basic 2Mbps service where they can demonstrate local need/demand, and the capacity to make it happen at a reasonable cost.

£20M of funding has been made available by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) through Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK).

The 10% hardest to reach area has not been clearly defined and we are keen to hear from anyone who wishes to take forward a project in their community early so we can make sure it qualifies. We will also need to establish how your project fits with wider network developments across Cheshire, Warrington & Halton to ensure integration, sustainability of service and value for money.

The deadline for expression of interest for the first round is the 31st Jan 2012 but we believe there will be a further round of funding later in 2012.

Please follow the link below for further information and contact.

Chris Capes 01244 973164

Lauren Kelly 01244 976955

Cheshire Community Action (which is part of the Rural Community Action Network or RCAN) is working with the Local Authorities to offer support on potential projects. If you would like to discuss the application process further, Cheshire Community Action may be able to help. Please contact us before 13th January 2012:

John Heselwood 01606 350042

<http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/funding-sources/rural-community-broadband-fund>