



RSN Rural Economies Seminar - 30th November 2022

1. Founded in 2009, Airband is an independent internet service provider bringing high speed broadband to homes, business and industry in rural and hard to reach areas. We are proud to work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, BDUK, local authorities and communities to build high availability infrastructure that residents, businesses and other ISPs can access to help overcome the UK's digital divide. Trusted by governments, industry partners and communities to bring the fastest, most reliable broadband service to rural communities, industrial parks and outdoor sites - Our supply footprint - North & South Wales | Oxford | Shropshire | Warwickshire | Worcestershire | Herefordshire | Gloucestershire | Somerset | Devon
2. So, what happens outside this supply footprint – I am sure it will surprise a lot of listeners to learn that there are over 200 Internet Service Providers (ISP's) in the UK from whom you could buy broadband and in addition a further 7,000 Ofcom authorised telco resellers all able to supply a broadband connection from BT Wholesale or one of the remaining ISP's. Obviously, BT remain the largest ISP and they supply on a retail and wholesale basis to the Ofcom 7,000 members. Therefore, Airband can supply connections elsewhere via other commercial network opportunities.
3. So why is broadband such a big thing?
 - a) Brings Local Business to Global Markets - Websites like Ebay, Facebook, are a haven for anyone else who has something to sell. Businesses with services to offer can also promote their brand online and put the internet to work for them. With a broadband connection, businesses can connect to millions of consumers in just a few clicks.
 - b) Educational Opportunities - From home schooling to college degrees and further education – it's all available online. Most educational programs now offer an online program that's easier on rural students living hours away from the nearest campus.
 - c) Connects Public to Healthcare - Rural clinics and hospitals can quickly and securely connect to larger, urban medical centres with specialists and advanced equipment. Patients can even live chat with doctors – all without a long drive into the nearest city.
 - d) Consumers Can Benefit from E-Commerce Saving - Not only are online consumers saving a trip to the store, but promo codes, online rewards points, flash sales, and free shipping programs like Amazon Prime can offer some real incentives for online shoppers.
 - e) Increases Area Job Growth - "If you build it, they will come." A small town with commercial land to sell is all well and good but add in a solid network that will connect a large business to its vendors, employees, and consumers, and you've got real potential for potential employers. Big business brings jobs, and high-speed internet brings the businesses.

- f) Enables Individuals to Start and Grow a Business - With easy access to online consumers, website building tools, networks, and online advertising options, there's little to no barrier to entry for new business owners.
- g) Allows Users to Stay in Touch with Friends and Family - Grandma and Grandpa can enjoy retirement in Florida and still see their loved ones in real-time on the computer screen. We joke, but broadband has truly changed the way we communicate.
- h) Offers New Tools for Farmers to Build Business - There are entire websites devoted to buying a selling livestock, and farmers use the internet to analyse weather data, manage nutrient application, map their crop yields, and adjust planting for the next season with modern precision agriculture tools. Rural broadband means farmers can have an easier time bringing their product to market and complying with regulations.
- i) Local Businesses Can Share Location Online - Websites and social media presence aside, businesses can simply list their business online and drive traffic to their physical location. Outsiders don't need to reach for a local phone book or newspaper – directions, address, and contact information is just an "Ok, Google" away.
- j) Workers Cut Down on Commuting, Increase Virtual Work - thousands of pounds are saved in rural communities where employees once had no other choice than to drive 1+ hours to work and put wear/tear on their vehicles. Lower car maintenance expenses and less stress – sounds like a win/win.
- k) Businesses Run More Efficiently - High-speed broadband means businesses can connect to helpful tools and apps. Employee payroll, direct deposit, online software like QuickBooks, Adobe, Office, and even online banking are luxuries to which some rural areas simply don't have access.

Today, high-speed Internet is the backbone for 21st century economic growth in the digital economy. Unnecessary price increases in competitive broadband markets will have far-reaching negative impacts on UK economic growth and development plus without ample investment in modern networks, consumers and the entire broadband ecosystem.

- 4. So what broadband services are available and what do I need – essentially connections are confined to 4 product sets.
 - a) Copper*
 - b) Fibre – duct & pole fed
 - c) Wireless – line of sight
 - d) 4/5G – coverage

*In December 2025, telephony in the UK will change forever. Openreach – the infrastructure division of BT – will retire the old copper lines that have been at the heart of the UK's telephony for decades.

5. What products & speeds are available

- a) Copper – legacy supply still providing up to 80Mbps down and 20Mbps up but unlikely in rural areas.
- b) Fibre – 150 Mbps down with 50Mbps up 900 Mbps down with 200 Mbps up.
- c) Wireless – 40 Mbps down with 10 Mbps up.
- d) 4G – average speed likely to be !5 Mbps

5. There is a huge array of cost alternatives in the market, but Airband are committed to keep cost as competitive as possible and prices start @ £25 per month rising to £55 per month for the

900Mbps package for unlimited data packages. Beware of those operators who restrict data usage as overage can be expensive. Airband currently have 6 months free, with free router and free install (subject to survey). 18-month contract applies. In addition, we are currently offering a free 18-month contract to village halls if they are our footprint. BEWARE:- cost is not everything and can be an unsatisfactory race to the bottom for providers and end users alike. Reliability of service must be considered along with after care as paramount planning. Likewise consider what disaster recovery options are available and beneficial to you, 4/5G data only SIM is the simplest to set up.

6. Questions to ask –

- a) What do I use my broadband for?
- b) What speeds do I need?
- c) What hardware do I need? Some providers use a router with an RRP of £8!
- d) Do I understand contract length?
- e) What are my service SLA's ?
- f) What products are available in my area?

Finish – Airband are committed to growing their network in hard to reach areas and further committed to help those individuals and businesses with products and services that are competitively priced with excellent hardware and after care service.

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