

Gigabit Project FAQs

1. You talk about grants, vouchers and registering – can you explain more?
 - a. The government and Hampshire County Council are providing funding so that local communities can have fibre broadband installed sooner than might be commercially viable. The grants from government are £1500 per house or £3500 per business, and are referred to as Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) vouchers. Hampshire are matching the government funding for houses only, so in total £3000 is available for each house. Each address is eligible for one voucher only – house or business but not both.
 - b. The grant requires you to pledge your voucher to the installing company and to take a fibre broadband service for at least 12 months, providing a speed of at least 30Mbps or at least double your current broadband speed. You will have to agree to this later in the project, but before installation begins so the installer knows how much grant funding will be available.
 - c. At present we are asking houses and businesses who are likely to want fibre broadband to register that interest by sending an email with their house or business address to RopleyGigabit@outlook.com. This is so that we can assess the level of interest.
2. If I register for the Gigabit Project, what exactly am I committing to?
 - a. At this stage nothing. If we attract enough interest at this stage a complete design and quote for the installation will be provided and each household/business will then be asked to pledge its voucher and agree to take out a fibre broadband contract for at least 12 months.
3. Can I change my mind later and un-register?
 - a. Yes, but if too many people do this the project may fail.
4. What happens if not enough Ropley households and businesses register?
 - a. The project will fail and we will have to wait much longer for fibre broadband.
5. How quickly do I have to make up my mind to register?
 - a. The Hampshire County Council fund is limited and once this runs out the project will be more difficult to fund. We are looking to finalise our project application in December 2020.
6. If the project goes ahead for the village, am I obliged to join or change to a different provider?
 - a. That depends on the supplier chosen to install the fibre. If we select Openreach then most providers will be available (a full list of current providers is available at <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fttp-providers>), but if we select Wessex Internet you would need to change to them.
7. I have heard that the Gigabit Project will increase the value of my house. How is this?
 - a. Access to fast broadband is viewed by many people now as a fundamental requirement, so areas without it become less desirable. Most property specialists agree that houses in areas with fibre broadband are more saleable.
8. Will I really benefit from faster broadband speeds?
 - a. TV entertainment will increasingly be delivered over the internet and higher definition TV will require faster speeds; working from home or home schooling and education will be easier and any internet based activity will be quicker and more enjoyable.
9. I am worried what Gigabit means, is it the same as Superfast broadband?
 - a. Superfast Broadband is generally regarded as a download speed of 24Mbps (millions of bits per second) or faster. A Gigabit broadband connection is capable of delivering 1000Mbps (a billion bits per second) so up to 40 times faster than Superfast broadband.
10. If the project goes ahead for the village, might it be possible that I will have to pay more for my broadband?
 - a. Service Providers generally charge around £10 per month more for a fibre broadband contract than regular phone broadband, but it will be a much faster connection. We have provided some examples of fibre broadband packages currently available in other Openreach wholesale FTTP areas at <http://www.myropley.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FibrePackages.pdf>

11. I have recently moved to the village and previously had a fast fibre broadband connection. Is this what the Gigabit Project is offering?
 - a. Most fibre broadband schemes today use a technology called FTTC (Fibre to the Cabinet) where a fast fibre connection provides the internet to a roadside cabinet but the final part of the connection ("the last mile") uses the older copper technology. FTTC will provide up to 80Mbps if you are close to the cabinet. The Gigabit project will offer up to 1000Mbps.
12. Will this involve digging up my garden to lay the new cable?
 - a. If we select Openreach as the installer they will use either overhead fibre cables or existing ducting. If we select Wessex they install by using remote controlled moles to burrow underground so the fibre cable will appear close to your house, but will not require digging up your garden.
13. Will traffic in the village be disrupted during the installation work?
 - a. We do not anticipate significant disruption using either installer.
14. How much will this cost me?
 - a. If we attract sufficient registrations then the Government and Hampshire vouchers will cover the installation costs and there will be no upfront costs. Monthly contract costs will be typically £10 per month more than regular broadband over copper cables, so you would be committing to about £120 additional broadband cost for a year, but for a much faster service.
15. What will I be able to do with it that I can't do today?
 - a. See answer 8.
16. Am I committing irrevocably when I register interest? If not, when and how do I end up formally signed up?
 - a. No. Also see following FAQ.
17. How do I apply for a grant? It all sounds a bit daunting – what forms do I have to fill in? Can someone help us?
 - a. We will supply the email addresses of all those who have registered to our chosen installer and they will contact you to seek your agreement to use your voucher for the installation and to take a 12 month fibre broadband contract. We can help if needed.
18. I made the switch to Call Flow three years ago and it was all a bit of a fuff. Can I still get their service down the fibre or will I have to change my router and email address again?
 - a. No, the Call Flow network is a closed network. You can remain with Call Flow or switch but this will require a new router (usually provided free). You should not need to change your email address.
19. Why can't Callflow just do this for us?
 - a. We asked them to quote for the installation but they declined.
20. Once the network is in, what will I need to do to take advantage of it?
 - a. Sign up with a service provider that is included on Openreach's list of suppliers - see <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/ftp-providers>
21. Can't we just wait – the government has said this will all happen over the next few years anyway? And won't 5G solve it?
 - a. We could, but that relies on Openreach having sufficient funding to install it. Using this scheme funds Openreach to do it much earlier. 5G technology is unlikely to provide the same speeds as fibre in rural areas as there would need to be too many base stations to be economic.
22. When will we get it?
 - a. Openreach have indicated that it is currently taking between 9 and 12 months to install from signed agreements.
23. Do I have to pay anything to register interest?
 - a. No.
24. If I register now, will I be able to change my mind later without impacting the viability of the project?

- a. See answer 3.
25. If I register and then move house, will the new home-owner be obligated?
- a. Only if you have agreed to the installer using your voucher and taking a contract.
26. Will I retain my current telephone number?
- a. Technically fibre broadband and your landline phone are completely separate. If you have fibre broadband installed you can keep your existing copper based phone service and number. Some providers also support phone service over fibre and you can usually move your existing phone number to that service.
27. Will I have to buy new telephony equipment if I switch to fibre?
- a. No. Most fibre service providers can provide a phone service over fibre and can move your phone number over, and your existing phone equipment can be connected to the new router.
28. I have a contract with another supplier for broadband and telephony service at the moment, can I still register interest?
- a. Yes, although a few customers who have FTTP (Fibre to the Premises) service provided by Call Flow in Monkwood would not be eligible for the vouchers as they have already enjoyed Government subsidy through the Call Flow trial program.
29. Would I still need to pay landline and broadband charges if fibre is installed?
- a. If you elect to keep your phone service then you will need to pay line rental and phone charges. When you switch to fibre broadband you will move your existing copper broadband contract to a fibre broadband contract with either your existing or a new provider.
30. Would I have to pay for the fibre connection from the street into my house?
- a. We are seeking to have fibre installed across the village, but if you do not register or agree to the use of your voucher then the fibre will pass your house but not be connected to it. If you later decide to take fibre you will need to pay to have the house connected to the pole or duct in the road.
31. Would I have to commit to a contract with BT if they install the fibre network?
- a. BT and Openreach are technically separate companies. Openreach build and run the network. You can take out a contract for the fibre service from any service provider that operates on the Openreach network (see <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fttp-providers>), so it does not have to be BT.
32. If enough people register interest now to enable you to get the funding required to make this no cost to the homeowner and then lots of people pull out after the project starts, will remaining householders have to make up any shortfall in funds?
- a. The installation will not start until enough households and businesses have agreed to pledge their vouchers and take a 12 month contract.
33. When would I have to make a firm commitment?
- a. Probably in February or March 2021.
34. I have a registered business at my home address, do you need to know this and does it make any difference?
- a. Yes. We can claim funding of £3000 for each household that registers (£1500 from Government plus £1500 from Hampshire County Council), but we can claim £3500 from Government for each business that registers. We cannot claim for a household and a business at the same address.
35. If all my neighbours register interest but I don't can I still retain my copper infrastructure or will I be forced to change?
- a. You can continue to use your existing infrastructure, however see following FAQ also.
36. If I don't change to fibre will Openreach still be obligated to maintain the copper infrastructure?
- a. Openreach have started a public consultation process on a proposal to shut down the existing phone network - see <https://www.openreach.co.uk/orpg/home/products/wlrwithdrawal/wlrwithdrawal.do> in

fact from 1st December 2020 you will not be able to order a new phone service in Salisbury. It is likely that the existing phone network will be switched off in 2026.

37. If I don't register interest now and change my mind later once the project starts, will I have to pay installation costs to my house?
 - a. Possibly depending on whether the grant funding is still available or not. Vouchers for the current Government scheme have to be claimed by 31st March 2021.
38. Will Openreach stop maintaining the current copper infrastructure in the future, and if they do, what will it mean for Ropley householders?
 - a. See answer 36.
39. There may be a number of properties in the area that are rented out, is there a way to find out which ones and contact landlords who may not live in the area. They may have an interest in signing up.
 - a. There is no simple way to find out which properties are rented out.
40. What will happen on change over day – am I likely to encounter problems that will mean loss of service for any period of time, who will address my problems on the day, will the migration be seamless?
 - a. If you are staying with the same service provider they should manage the changeover. As the copper and fibre networks are separate it should be possible to have both services at the same time although you would not want that for longer than necessary.
41. What happens if I decide I want to pull out at any time?
 - a. Between registration and agreement to take a contract there is no cost but you may jeopardise the project. There may be a penalty to pay if you pull out after agreeing to pledge your voucher and take a contract.
42. How much are new broadband contracts likely to cost?
 - a. We have provided a list of fibre broadband contracts available in areas where Openreach based FTTP is operational at <http://www.myropley.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FibrePackages.pdf>.
43. Will I have to terminate my current broadband contract for the changeover date – I am concerned about this because I will have to pay a penalty if I do?
 - a. As stated in answer 40 you could maintain your existing service alongside a new fibre service. It is likely to take at least 12 months to get the new service operational so we would not recommend taking out a new copper broadband contract for more than 12 months now.
44. How do I know it will deliver as promised?
 - a. Openreach have already installed this technology to several million houses in the UK.
45. What will I have to do in the future if I decide not to join the Ropley programme?
 - a. See answer 30.