



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2017

Dear Constituent,

I am writing this letter because I appreciate how important having a reliable and fast internet connection is for my constituents.

I have been working hard to ensure that superfast broadband is available across the constituency and that the provision of superfast broadband is fully incorporated in Northamptonshire County Council's plans moving forward.

I am pleased to see that the Government has invested £1.7 billion of public money to support vital improvements in broadband services across the UK as part of our wider efforts to improve the country's digital infrastructure. This funding has created more than four million new superfast connections to date, with over 91% of UK premises now able to access superfast speeds and we are on track to reach our target of 95% by the end of next year.

The Government has allocated over £8.3 million to Northamptonshire, with local bodies providing an additional £8 million to support the Superfast Northamptonshire Project. I am delighted to confirm to you that the County Council has selected Gigaclear for two contracts to help deliver Stage 3 of this project. This new partnership raises the game on broadband speeds by bringing ultrafast broadband (up to 1 gigabit) to more communities and premises in parts of rural Northamptonshire. About 6,300 premises will be connected under the two contracts.

You may already be aware of Gigaclear as it has already passed over 5,500 premises in the county as part of their own commercial plans. The deal with the County Council means that many more areas will benefit from a full fibre solution. The network will reach rural areas where there are no commercial plans and which otherwise would be unlikely to be served. The two contracts involve £6.58m of public funding, including £1.68m from the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and £4.9m from the County Council. Gigaclear are investing over £3.65m in the target area.

This latest initiative from Superfast Northamptonshire takes the project substantially towards the ultimate target of full coverage, meaning either connectivity is already in place or plans confirmed for about 98% of all premises. The County Council is now



working with Gigaclear to mobilise the deployment, including the commencement of the more detailed planning and survey work required before the network build can commence. More detailed information on the roll out programme will be available once this work is completed, hopefully by April/May 2017. The fibre build will commence later this year and will be completed by December 2018.

In the meantime, for individuals currently unable to receive fast broadband speeds I would direct you to the Government-funded Better Broadband Scheme, which provides a backstop in the form of a basic broadband connection, allowing you to conduct essential online tasks. The scheme offers the choice of a range of providers using technologies such as satellite or fixed wireless. The Government subsidises the setup of these connections through the provision of vouchers, with consumers able to choose an appropriate subscription. Application details are available at <http://basicbroadbandchecker.culture.gov.uk/>.

I trust that this update is useful and clarifies some of the matters regarding the provision of superfast broadband in the constituency. If you seek any further information regarding the Superfast Northamptonshire project, such as the roll-out schedule, then feel free to visit the project site at: www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net or email bigidea@northamptonshire.gov.uk.

I appreciate how important this issue is for many of my constituents and if I can ever be of further assistance regarding this matter or any other, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY