

Better broadband for rural Teesdale under Project Gigabit

- GoFibre to build lightning-fast gigabit-capable connections more than twenty times faster than 'superfast'
- Made possible via Project Gigabit, the government's £5 billion plan to boost broadband across the UK

More than 4,000 rural premises in Teesdale will gain access to faster and more reliable broadband after a multi-million contract was awarded under the government's Project Gigabit scheme.

Borderlink, trading as GoFibre, will work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Durham County Council to enable thousands of hard-to-reach homes and businesses to access gigabit-capable broadband, made possible by £6.6m of DCMS investment.

The project will cover towns, villages and hamlets across the region including premises near to Barnard Castle and Bishop Auckland, subject to further survey completion.

Gigabit-capable networks are lightning-fast and fit for the future, allowing communities to upload and download data with none of the disruptions associated with ageing copper networks. More than 70 per cent of the UK can access gigabit connections – such as full fibre – but these are mostly in urban areas which is why the government is investing £5 billion to connect hard-to-reach areas that might otherwise miss out.

The contract with GoFibre's parent company Borderlink has been signed and planning is now underway, with construction due to begin in Spring 2023. This is the second Project Gigabit contract to be awarded following one covering North Dorset in August.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

Families and businesses across rural Teesdale can soon say goodbye to buffering broadband and hello to lightning-fast speeds thanks to the government leading the biggest broadband roll out in British history.

I'm delighted Teesdale will be one of the first places to benefit from the dozens of multi-million pound contracts we will be signing over the coming weeks and months to make sure people in 'hard-to-reach' areas across the UK get the broadband they deserve.

A GoFibre spokesperson, said:

Closing the digital divide and helping local communities to thrive by providing previously unimaginable levels of capability through high-quality broadband services is at the heart of everything we do. Through our latest appointment, we will work as a trusted partner, equipping Teesdale with world-class connectivity built for the future.

GoFibre is a Scottish independent broadband provider bringing full fibre broadband services to homes and businesses across Scotland and the north of England. This is the first contract Borderlink Broadband has been successfully awarded under Project Gigabit.

The fast, reliable networks delivered by Project Gigabit will level-up mostly rural and remote communities across the UK, as well as tackling pockets of poor connectivity in urban areas. Having the fastest connections also means the UK is fit for the future, with broadband infrastructure designed to deliver for people's needs for decades to come.

Cllr Susan McDonnell, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for digital, customer services and procurement, said:

We look forward to working on this exciting development, which will benefit thousands of our residents and businesses in rural areas.

Reliable broadband is integral to our ambitious plans for economic growth across County Durham. It plays a significant role in opening up a wider range of education and employment opportunities and helping communities to connect with each other and thrive.

Following a £164 million investment earlier this year from Gresham House's British Sustainable Infrastructure Fund, GoFibre is accelerating its rollout of full fibre broadband throughout Scotland and the north of England, enabling the company to transform more lives and address the UK's digital divide. GoFibre already has a presence across East Lothian, Fife and the Scottish Borders, with the aim to reach hundreds of thousands of homes over the next three years.

Households and businesses can register their interest in GoFibre's full fibre broadband services by visiting www.gofibre.co.uk/register.

–ENDS–

Notes to Editors

- Project Gigabit is DCMS's flagship £5 billion programme to enable hard-to-reach communities to access lightning-fast gigabit-capable broadband.
- The Teesdale contract assigns around £6.6m of UK government funding to build a gigabit-capable broadband network to more than 4,000 local premises, subject to survey completion.
- GoFibre, trading under parent company Borderlink Broadband, secured an

investment of £164 million in early 2022 from the British Sustainable Infrastructure fund, managed by Gresham House PLC, to accelerate its rollout of full fibre broadband throughout Scotland and the North of England, enabling the company to transform more lives and help to address the UK's digital divide.

- Founded by CEO, Alex Cacciamani, and his wife, Laura, in their hometown of Duns, GoFibre was created out of the need to solve their broadband problems at home. After moving to the Scottish Borders in 2017 with their three kids, they realised quickly there was a need for faster broadband in these rural areas and set about solving the issue.
- The company is headquartered in Edinburgh, with an engineering depot in Berwick-Upon-Tweed.
- With GoFibre, customers can access speeds of between 100Mbps and 10Gbps, with standard pricing starting at £36 per month.
- Individuals and businesses can find out more and register their interest in full fibre broadband by visiting <http://www.gofibre.co.uk/get-in-touch/>

[Trade Secretary speech at the Atlantic Future Forum in New York](#)

Thank you and good afternoon everyone.

How wonderful it to be at the Atlantic Future Forum.

This a superb event organised by the Royal Navy and our teams from the Department for International Trade, the Ministry of Defence and of course the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

It is particularly poignant being on HMS Queen Elizabeth given the events of the last few weeks.

To say it's been emotional would be an understatement. For everyone in the UK, young or old Her Late Majesty had been ever presence of force in British Life. Many of us here were more than her subjects we were Her Majesty's Ambassadors, Her Majesty's Civil Service, Her Majesty's Armed Forces, Her Royal Navy, Her Government.

Our late sovereign was also, of course, a stateswoman, who devoted herself to deepening the special relationship.

So it is a particular privilege to stand on this vessel which she named at Rosyth Dockyard 8 years ago, as we begin the Carolean age in the service of His Majesty.

And talk about an important aspect of the US and UK's shared future and by

that I mean...our economic partnership.

I lived briefly in the US, and learned very quickly that Americans and New Yorkers especially, like to cut to the chase.

So, I'm going to get straight to the point:

Right now, there's a global growth slow-down underway.

And if you'll forgive the pun, we need all hands on-deck to get the world economy's wheels spinning again.

And that's why in the UK we're going for growth in a big way. And in fact some of you may have heard some major reforms we announced on Friday, to achieve this:

But before I go into what we are doing, it would be odd not to address the elephant in the room.. and the financial instability in markets over the last few days.

You would by now have heard the Bank of England taking short-term measures to provide stability – as is their job.

My colleagues, including the Chancellor, continue to work very closely with our institutions to support them in their aims while maintaining their independence. And we must look at all of this in the context of the fundamentals, which are that the UK economy is strong and we have a plan – a Growth Plan to cut taxes, promote enterprise and cut red tape for business.

So what are some of the things we're doing?

We're keeping corporation tax at the lowest in the G20 at 19% not cutting keeping.

We're creating low tax investment zones around the country, to make it quicker and easier to build and get things done because the regulatory environment has not kept pace with our economic needs.

We're accelerating critical infrastructure projects in sectors like transport, energy, and telecoms...to ensure we invest in our future and deliver for the next generation.

We're also going to be spending 3% of GDP on defence by 2030. Something I know looking at all of the uniforms in the room is especially relevant to all of you here today.

We're rolling out significant financial services reforms that will make the UK an even better place to do business and much more.

There is radical change happening on our side of the Atlantic. It's the kind of radical change that we've not seen for 40 years.

We know it is bold.

We know it comes with risk.

But in these volatile times, every option, even the status quo is risky.

And the Prime Minister, my predecessor but one in my role as Trade Secretary gets trade and knows that our global economic relationships have got to be at the heart of this work.

Right now, US-UK trade is booming. Sadly, not enough people know this or hear the message enough. So I want to make sure they do and I'll continue to bang the drum.

But it's the investment story that's even more interesting.

Increasing numbers of American firms are realising that backing the UK is a great move.

I could make your eyes glaze over by trotting out an endless list of statistics! Don't worry I'm not going to do that today

.... but the numbers speak for themselves:

US businesses already invested £479 billion pounds into in our economy –To put that figure into context it's more than Sweden's annual GDP.

Every day just under 1.5 million Britons go to work for an American firm.

And in the year to March alone, American investment created 27,000 British jobs.

I know to some extent I'm preaching to the choir here.

Because I don't have to look far around this room to spot businesses that are boosting their UK operations.

In fact, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, are just some of the American firms here today that have said they will do precisely that. And we look forward to working with them.

Undoubtedly, factors like good infrastructure, our legal system and a lack of red-tape, are part of the UK's attraction.

But there's another reason too. We are fast becoming the world's innovation destination.

Just like Manhattan, we're an island full of dynamism and ingenuity.

We're the nation with big ideas.

We're Europe's unicorn factory.

And the first quarter of this year our tech start-ups attracted more global investment than anywhere bar the US....and partnerships between UK and American firms are pushing forward progress....

For instance, there's a really interesting story taking place right now involving a firm in Cambridge called PhoreMost and a business named Polaris Quantum Biotech from North Carolina.

Together, they want to cut the time it takes to create cancer therapies. That's not only a great business partnership, it's literally a life-saving collaboration.

But I want to do even more to make sure American ambitions collide with British ideas or vice versa.

So here's my elevator pitch. The UK is pro-ambition, pro entrepreneur, pro-growth and home to top-flight talent fizzing with extraordinary ideas.

And we are more determined than ever before to turn the country into the place to come if you want your business to succeed.

Of course, we mustn't pretend everything is perfect or easy. We know that, sometimes trading our way to growth can be more difficult than it needs to be.

But it's because the US and UK are close that we can fix problems wherever we find them.

Look at the way we recently solved the Section 232 tariff dispute on UK steel and aluminium exports and reached an understanding on the Airbus-Boeing dispute.

Very soon, Americans will be able to pick up a leg of Welsh lamb at their local store for the first time in decades, after a long-standing rule was removed.

That's obviously big news for British farmers. And it's arguably even better news for Americans who get to tuck in on some of the finest grass-fed lamb in the world...

And, of course, we're delighted that bourbon is fully back on the drinks menu, in Britain, following the Section 232 resolution.

I know that behind the scenes we're working hard to resolve issues and make it quicker, easier and cheaper for our firms to do business.

The UK also sees the huge potential to develop our relationships with individual states as another huge opportunity.

In May, under the stewardship of my predecessor, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, who is also here today, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding on trade and economic cooperation with Indiana – a state that already buys \$1.4 billion worth of UK goods every year.

North Carolina followed in July.

And I know the DIT team is working hard on continuing Anne Marie's legacy

with me and securing more this year...so watch this space.

Given we're anchored not far from the Statue of Liberty, I want to end by saying a few words about trade as a force for progress and a force for good.

Free markets and fair trade are very personal to me.

Too many people trot them out as cliches and platitudes, but a world without these freedoms is not just poorer it's also more dangerous.

I grew up in Nigeria. And I saw first-hand what happens when a nation can't trade or worse embraces protectionism.

Not long ago, the government there banned rice and tomato not tomatato imports to support local industry. The result was not a boom in production, but supply shortages, price rises and people smuggling in tomatoes like they were diamonds.

I will never forget the sight of my mother a university professor stuffing her suitcase with Tesco Value Rice when she visited me in London because it was cheaper there than back home for her.

One of the many reasons I'm so frustrated by the trope that Brexit was the UK retreating from the world, is because it is completely untrue. I voted to leave the European Union and I saw Brexit as a once in a generation opportunity for the UK to embrace the world and trade was and still is at the heart of that.

So I want to make sure that we use our freedoms to build better and fairer trading relationships with emerging economies.

When trade is open and free and everyone plays by the rules, we will win and developing countries gain an alternative to authoritarian regimes.

But at a time when weaker economies are being exploited by those who don't share our values, it's not enough to talk about why free and fairtrade matters, we need to show why too.

Last month, my department launched the Developing Countries Trading Scheme. It's one of the most generous initiatives of its type in the world and it's going to give a boost to businesses in 65 countries by cutting red tape and lowering tariffs.

It's early days but I'm already hearing how the scheme is giving entrepreneurs in countries like Bangladesh the opportunities they need to grow their businesses. And closer to home, I'm very much focused on exploring how trade can support the reconstruction of Ukraine.

Of course, the UK-US trading relationship couldn't be a better illustration of capitalism's power to influence, unite and act as a counter to protectionism and authoritarian regimes.

And We're already using trade to tackle some of the biggest issues facing the

world.

At last year's G7 we renewed our Atlantic Charter; originally signed by Churchill and Roosevelt pledging UK and US economic and security collaboration.

Through our Future of Atlantic Trade dialogues, we're working on critical issues, such as developing and diversifying our supply chains in response to the war in Ukraine and the pandemic.

We're deepening our ties in the Indo-Pacific through our AUKUS pact.

Our response to the Indo Pacific region's rapid growth and China's growing assertiveness, is another shared challenge.

And I know we're both committed to opposing economic coercion, and the unfair trade practices that choke competition and penalise countries that follow the rules.

President Ronald Reagan once said: 'Free trade serves the cause of economic progress and it serves the cause of world peace.'

And the UK-US economic partnership is the clearest possible example of why free trade and free markets are not just integral to our growth but to the freedoms we share.

Next month, we'll mark the 75th anniversary of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade – the forerunner of today's multilateral system.

Our nations helped to forge that deal after WW2, following long negotiations.

At GATT's heart was an acknowledgement that free and fair trade would be key to our future.

Again today, we face unprecedented challenges.

Again, at times, we may have differences...

But just like the American and British teams who gathered round the negotiating table three quarters of a century ago.

I know we are committed to deepening our transatlantic economic partnership.

Building our businesses' bonds of commerce.

And demonstrating, unequivocally, how through free trade we can together create a better world. Thank you.

National Drought Group agrees further action to tackle drought through winter

Participants at the latest [National Drought Group](#) (NDG) meeting have set out further action needed now and over winter to mitigate the impacts of drought on water supplies, agriculture and the environment next year.

Senior decision makers from the Environment Agency, government, water companies and key representative groups, met today (28 September) to discuss the current situation, which – despite recent rainfall – sees most areas across England still experiencing drought conditions.

Although essential supplies of water remain safe, and many areas of England have experienced rainfall in recent weeks, reservoirs across the country continue to be at lower levels than usual. Nearly half of reservoirs were classed as exceptionally low for the time of year in the most recent [monthly water situation report](#) for August, with total reservoir stocks at 52% of total capacity on 20 September.

September rainfall has had a limited positive impact on water levels, after six months of below average rainfall. Current September rainfall totals ranged from 47% of the long-term average (LTA) in north-west England to 89% of the LTA in south-east England. Very dry soils mean that rainfall will take longer to replenish groundwater and reservoir water levels.

As a result, most of England remains in drought, with 11 of the Environment Agency's 14 areas in drought. The remaining areas classed as being in 'prolonged dry weather' include Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire; the North East; and most recently Cumbria and Lancashire, which moved to prolonged dry weather status last week. Without average rainfall over autumn and winter, it is expected that the drought will continue into 2023.

The Group discussed how the tools within the pre-agreed water company drought plans have had a positive effect on demand so far, but the Environment Agency expects water companies to continue to take all the necessary actions to mitigate the impact of the drought by implementing their drought plans. This includes applying for drought permits and drought orders where required to increase their water supplies.

The following drought permits have recently been submitted to the Environment Agency by water companies:

1. South West Water have applied for a drought permit to manage the abstraction of water from the Tamar Lakes in Cornwall
2. Yorkshire Water have applied for drought permits to conserve water by reducing the flows out of the North West group of reservoirs
3. South East Water have applied for a drought permit to manage the

- abstraction of water from the Ardingly (River Ouse) reservoir
4. Thames Water have applied for a drought permit to manage the abstraction of water from the Farmoor (River Thames) reservoir

The Environment Agency have also recently applied to Defra for two [drought orders](#) to protect the water environment of the Black Moss and Elslack Reservoirs.

Today, National Drought Group members agreed to:

1. Take a proactive approach to implementing drought plan interventions and other, additional schemes, over the winter period.
2. Review the projections for autumn and winter and continue scenario planning into next year
3. Continue working collaboratively across sectors to manage the impacts on water supplies, the environment and agriculture.

David Dangerfield, Environment Agency Director of Water, Land and Biodiversity and chair of the NDG, said:

When rain falls, it is easy to assume the need to act against drought and prolonged dry weather has passed – but that is not the case. Water pressures on agriculture, wildlife and the environment remain high as we head into the autumn and winter, which is why we must continue to manage water wisely.

For this year – and indeed the coming decade – significant action must be taken if we are to mitigate the impacts of climate change on our water security.

The past summer has been a clear reminder of the need to effectively prepare for weather extremes and how we make the very best use of our water resources. Our National Framework for Water Resources sets out clearly what we are doing in the face of a new normal for water and we are determined to continue driving that forward.

Attending the National Drought Group meeting for the first time since taking up her role, Trudy Harrison, Minister for Water Security, said:

I look forward to working with the Environment Agency, water companies and everyone else involved in the water industry to strengthen our water security

While essential water supplies are safe, more work must be done to ensure that we accelerate the investment needed to cut leaks, increase water efficiency and water supply and better prepare for prolonged dry weather events over the coming decade.

Water companies must put the needs of their bill payers at the

heart of their plans – which means redoubling efforts to cut leakage, accelerate delivery of projects increasing water resilience and protect our natural environment.

Water companies have a statutory duty to ensure water supplies and it is for the individual companies to ensure they remain resilient for their customers.

In drought affected areas, the public and businesses should be very mindful of the pressures on water resources and should use water wisely. But while there is an important role for individuals to sustainably manage their usage, Government expects water companies to act to reduce leakage and fix leaking pipes as quickly as possible and take timely and wider action alongside government policy.

The National Drought Group will continue to work very closely together over the coming weeks. Environment Agency Chief Executive, Sir James Bevan, will chair a further meeting of the Group on 14 October when the Water Supply sub-group will report back on progress made with planning to manage any water shortfalls into 2023.

Further action

Action is already being taken by Government, Environment Agency, water companies, environmental and angling groups and farmers to manage the impacts. The EA's ongoing actions include:

1. Managing abstraction licences to balance the needs of water companies and our natural environment;
2. Working with farmers, businesses and other abstractors to manage water availability and ensure they get the water they need to be resilient while maintaining our protection of the environment.
3. Operating water transfer schemes between different areas of the country, to make sure water gets to the areas which are worst affected by prolonged dry weather and the drought;
4. Planning with water companies and ensuring they are implementing their [drought plans](#) and applying for drought permits and drought orders where required. Every water company in England has a published drought plan available on their website;
5. Monitoring environmental conditions on key rivers to check temperature, dissolved oxygen levels and algae activity
6. Activating EA waterways drought plans to carefully manage navigations
7. Reoxygenating water and rescuing fish in distress where river flows are especially low;

Further information:

Attendees at the National Drought Group included

1. Environment Agency
2. Defra
3. AHDB
4. HTA

5. DLUHC
6. Canal and River Trust
7. Consumer Council for Water
8. Drinking Water Inspectorate
9. Energy UK
10. National Resources Wales
11. Rivers Trust
12. RSPB
13. Ofwat
14. UKHSA
15. Met Office
16. MOSL
17. Natural England
18. National Farmers Union
19. Water UK
20. Waterwise
21. Welsh Government
22. Affinity Water
23. Anglian Water
24. Northumbria Water
25. Southern Water
26. Yorkshire Water
27. SES
28. South Staffs Water
29. Thames Water
30. Severn Trent
31. South West Water
32. South East Water
33. United Utilities
34. Wessex Water
35. DCWW

Please see the map of Environment Agency areas [here](#).

The Environment Agency uses four stages to describe and manage drought conditions:

1. Prolonged dry weather
2. Drought
3. Severe Drought
4. Recovering Drought

Drought orders and drought permits

1. Water companies can apply for drought permits from the Environment Agency to help them manage public water supplies.
2. If granted, they give companies more flexibility to manage their resources during periods of drought.
3. A drought permit can last up to six months but can be amended to last up to a year.
4. Water companies will need to prove that they are making efforts to conserve water (for example by imposing a Temporary Use Ban (hosepipe

ban) before EA will grant a permit.

5. Drought orders can also be applied for by the Environment Agency or a water company. They can be used by the Environment Agency to protect the environment (an environmental drought order) or by water companies to maintain water supply.
6. Drought orders are issued/granted by the Environment Secretary.
7. Before granting an order, the Environment Secretary must be satisfied that there is an “exceptional shortage of rain”, and that there is an “actual or threatened serious deficiency in water supplies” or a “serious threat to the environment due to low flows or water levels”

Winners of the Falklands regional student competition 2022/2023 announced

World news story

The Falkland Islands Government and the British Embassies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay announce the winners of the 2022/2023 student competition to visit the Falkland Islands.



The Falkland Islands Government and the British Embassies in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile are delighted to announce the winners of this year’s regional student competition. Participants from the four countries were asked to submit a short video in English, in which they answered the question: “Why would I like to meet my neighbours in the Falkland Islands?”.

Almost 200 students entered the competition. All entries were reviewed and representatives from the Falkland Islands Government and British Embassies of the four countries selected the winners:

- Braian Espinoza Zalazar – Argentina
- Barbara Rost Dalchiavon – Brazil

- Isidora Ocampos – Chile
- Sofía Canessa – Uruguay

The winners will travel to the Falkland Islands in January, where they will spend a week experiencing the unique character of the Islands including its food and culture, nature and environment and meeting members of the community.

Published 28 September 2022

[Welcoming support for a peaceful two-state solution by Israeli and Palestinian leaders](#)

Thank you President, and I thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his helpful but sobering briefing.

Let me start by welcoming both Prime Minister Lapid and President Abbas' support for a two-state solution, during their speeches to the General Assembly last week. The UK firmly believes that a two-state solution, based on 1967 lines, with Jerusalem as a shared capital and a just solution for refugees is the best way to deliver long-term peace.

The challenges facing a two-state solution however remain significant. We share deep concerns about the deteriorating security situation in the West Bank. And we urge all parties to reduce tensions and avoid de-stabilising unilateral actions.

We urge Israel not to proceed with demolitions at Masafer Yatta, which would cause unnecessary suffering, and are against international law in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

We unequivocally condemn the execution of five Gazans by Hamas this month. The UK opposes the death penalty in all circumstances.

In the West Bank, in 2022 more Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces since the UN started recording fatalities in 2005. The UK remains fully supportive of Israel's right to self-defence, but where there are accusations of excessive use of force, we advocate swift, transparent investigations.

We are appalled too by terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens. Such attacks cannot be justified.

We appreciate Norway's leadership in convening the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee

this month. We welcome progress on economic measures, including the electronic payment of Palestinian workers in Israel, and work ensuring the continued success of E-Vat. However, bolder and faster action is needed to deliver real economic change in the OPTs. TThe UK is committed to supporting another meeting of the Joint Economic Committee as soon as possible.

We also thank Jordan and Sweden for hosting a Ministerial meeting in support of UNRWA. The UK is a long-standing financial and political supporter of UNRWA, and we welcome UNRWA's continued support to Palestinian refugees across the region. We encourage further dialogue among partners to ensure delivery on UNRWA's mandate.

In conclusion President,

Peace will only be achieved only through meaningful dialogue between the parties, which tackles the drivers of instability and violence in the immediate term. We encourage further and deeper engagement towards this goal.

Thank you.