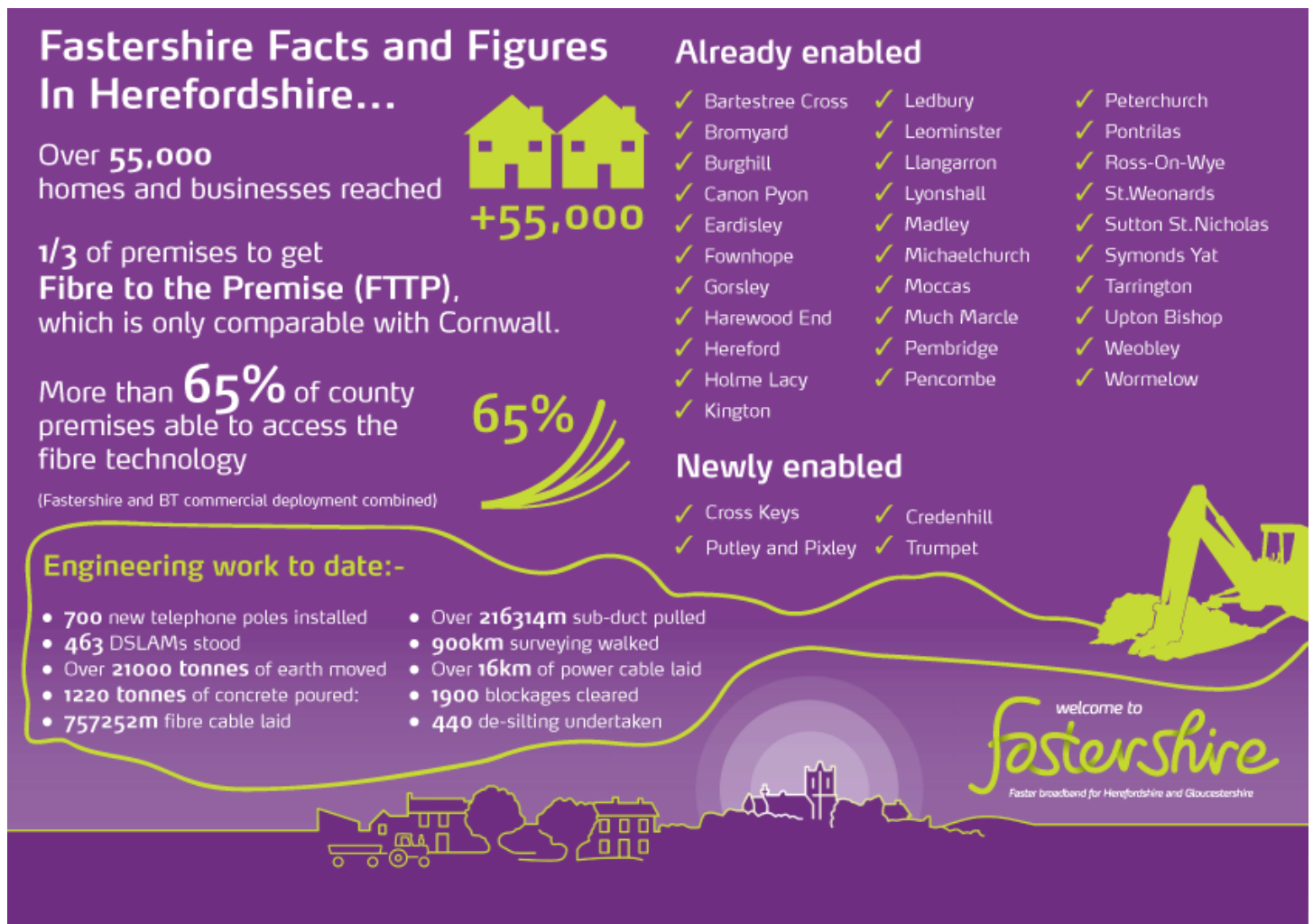


Members Briefing Note – January 2016



The Fastershire project, working to make faster broadband more widely available, has already reached more than 22,000 Herefordshire homes and businesses, many of them in some of the more remote parts of one of the UK's most rural counties. Combined with the BT commercial roll out more than 55,000 premises across the county are now fibre enabled.

The high number of sparsely populated communities in Herefordshire has brought different challenges as well as requiring additional infrastructure to be installed. Engineers working on the Fastershire roll-out have so far had to put up more than 700 new telephone poles, remove more than 1,200 tonnes of earth, and undertake tree cutting along more than 13 kilometres of road and lanes. In the Michaelchurch Escley area alone, engineers are currently installing around 14 kilometres of overhead cable to enable local homes and businesses to access fibre broadband.

Fastershire is a partnership between Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council with a contract with BT to deploy the fibre network funded by local and national government. The rollout plan in Herefordshire to reach more rural areas is based on seven geographical areas. By the end of December 2016 it is expected around 90 per cent of Herefordshire households and businesses will be able to access fibre broadband, with most achieving speeds of 30 megabits per second (Mbps).

The Revised 2014-2018 Broadband Strategy was approved by Herefordshire Council Cabinet on 3rd December 2015 details the steps to be taken to deliver the ambition of fast broadband for all who need it through 2018.