

freedom fibre

Building a fast and affordable full Fibre network Pickmere

Feb 2022

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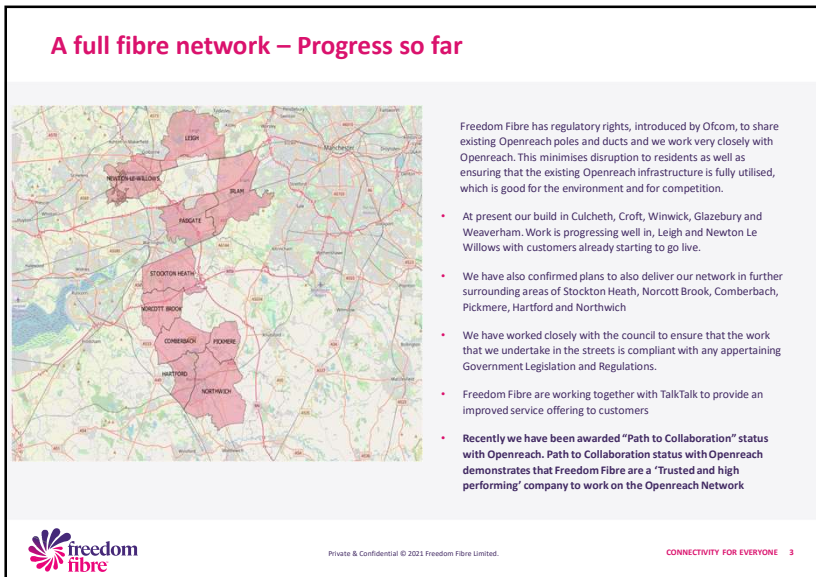
Background

- Freedom Fibre Ltd, formed back in 2020, is a privately funded company with its head office in Irlam
- The CEO of Freedom Fibre is Neil McArthur; the former owner and CEO of Opal Telecoms; one of the founders and Chief Technical Officer for TalkTalk and the CEO for Fibre Nation (subsequently acquired by CityFibre Holdings)
- The Management Team of Freedom Fibre has over 80+ years of experience in the Telecoms industry principally through Opal Telecoms, TalkTalk and FibreNation and has a highly experienced and qualified field team
- The Freedom Fibre team has been extensively involved with the rollout of FTTP in the UK over the last 4+ years
- Freedom Fibre's aim is to build fibre networks across the North West in the first 2 years and then expanding further into the Midlands, Wales and the North of England.
- The Company has plans to build to 100k (rural/urban combined) homes by Dec 2022 and 2 million homes by the end of 2025

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A full fibre network – Progress so far



Freedom Fibre has regulatory rights, introduced by Ofcom, to share existing Openreach poles and ducts and we work very closely with Openreach. This minimises disruption to residents as well as ensuring that the existing Openreach infrastructure is fully utilised, which is good for the environment and for competition.

- At present our build in Culcheth, Croft, Winwick, Glazebury and Weaverham. Work is progressing well in, Leigh and Newton Le Willows with customers already starting to go live.
- We have also confirmed plans to also deliver our network in further surrounding areas of Stockton Heath, Norcott Brook, Comberbach, Pickmere, Hartford and Northwich
- We have worked closely with the council to ensure that the work that we undertake in the streets is compliant with any appertaining Government Legislation and Regulations.
- Freedom Fibre are working together with TalkTalk to provide an improved service offering to customers
- Recently we have been awarded "Path to Collaboration" status with Openreach. Path to Collaboration status with Openreach demonstrates that Freedom Fibre are a 'Trusted and high performing' company to work on the Openreach Network

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The Plan for Pickmere

- TalkTalk already has a significant number of customers in Pickmere and wants to offer a fast Broadband service to those existing customers plus any new customers that is price competitive and affordable
- Freedom Fibre will be providing the funding and undertaking the building of the Fibre network and TalkTalk will be providing the broadband services to customers with some services going live late Summer 2022
- We believe there are no other full Fibre providers in the area currently, however plans change all the time.
- The build will make extensive use of the existing BTOR network of ducts and poles to ensure less disruption for residents than a full network build
- It is envisaged that any Street Works will be primarily limited to
 - installing any new chambers
 - putting in a few road crossings
 - clearing any duct blockages where they may not have been cleared already
 - Installing New infrastructure where needed which may include new ducts and/or telegraph poles where existing Openreach's infrasture is inaccessible
- We will work closely with the Council and all stakeholders in the building of the network

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Putting up New Poles

- It is inevitable that some new poles will need to be erected in the area. This can cause some conflict amongst residents following announcements of these plans.
- Freedom Fibre will engage with residents to ensure they are made aware of these changes:-
 - Area's whereby poles **are not** already positioned in a residential area, will receive a letter through the door for those residents impacted. This gives them details of how to raise any questions and arrange for an engineer to visit if required
 - Area's whereby poles are already in position, notifications with 30 days notice of any new poles will be placed in the streets, again giving details of how to contact us regarding questions or support
 - Freedom Fibre will always try to work with the residents for the best outcome, new poles can be an emotive subject and one we are fully aware of.
 - Freedom Fibre have recently put together a video online to support residents to understand why these poles are still necessary (<https://www.freedomfibre.com/post/neil-mcarthur-explains-freedom-fibre-s-telecom-pole-usage-and-ethos>)



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Engagement to date and Next Steps

We have engaged with the Street Works Teams as well as the local Parish Councils to request for further collaboration to share our plans. Additional meetings with the local councils can be arranged to share our plans

An application with DCMS for Gigabit Rural Vouchers has been approved for a small area south of the exchange in Pickmere which will support the additional build costs associated with a Rural build.

Our approach with the voucher scheme will be to invite customers to Register their interest on our website and pledge their voucher to Freedom Fibre as part of this build roll out.

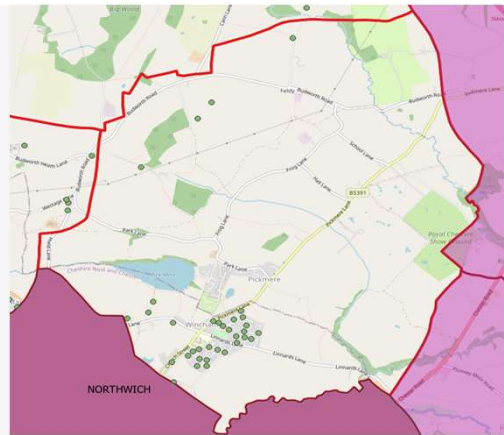
Next Steps

- As we progress with our build, it is advisable to arrange resident meetings with the local community to share our plans and ask questions about what to expect
- Request for support from any local Parish Council to arrange these sessions and advertise on social media groups to ensure residents are made aware



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DCMS Eligible Locations in Pickmere



- Green dots on map identify the locations of the DCMS eligible vouchers.
- FFL are looking to deliver its network to approx. 80-85% of this exchange boundary



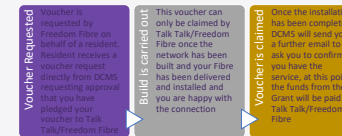
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Gigabit voucher scheme eligible in Wem – Pledge your Voucher

The Gigabit broadband voucher scheme, run by the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), operates across the entire UK. Residents in Burtonwood will be eligible for a voucher to pledge to the network operator who has an approved application.

The scheme offers grants to small and medium sized enterprises to help fund the cost of installing high-speed, superfast internet connections to the hardest to reach areas. The value of the voucher will contribute to the build cost of installing a Gigabit-capable connection at a customer's premises. Burtonwood is eligible for the voucher scheme and Freedom Fibre will be applying for an application to claim for a % of these vouchers to support the cost of this small Rural build.

When residents register their interest with us via the Talk Talk website, we will apply for the voucher on their behalf. The following process then applies



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