

NEWS RELEASE

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Bluenowhere Investing in Wales' Broadband Future

Anglesey, 11TH August 2010 - Bluenowhere, a new entrant to the Welsh broadband market, is today announcing plans to invest in technology-leading next generation wireless broadband infrastructure across the Anglesey and Môn a Menai region.

Bluenowhere has developed plans, as a Fibrespeed Service Provider, to establish a new, open-access, wholesale broadband infrastructure allowing new and existing retail service providers to reach homes and businesses currently unserved by broadband or receiving poor broadband. The scheme also has the support of the Isle of Anglesey County Council and is seen as a further step towards enhancing the broadband infrastructure of Wales which is a key objective of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Peter Curnow-Ford, Chairman, Bluenowhere says, "As we all know, the UK Government has pushed back its Universal Service Commitment ('USC') of 2Mbps for rural and remote areas to 2015, from 2012; the commitment we are announcing clearly shows that private industry can deliver the USC today with the support and partnership of local government. While the UK Government is currently looking at pilot projects and a top-down procurement to deliver the 2Mbps USC, which will delay action for at least another year, Bluenowhere is getting on and delivering now."

Bluenowhere is keen to leverage the Welsh Assembly's £2m "Broadband Support Scheme", to accelerate and expand the deployment of its network to cover the more commercially unviable communities in the region and bring broadband to ever more people.

Harry Aldridge, CEO, Bluenowhere says "We warmly welcome the launch of the Welsh Assembly's 'Broadband Support Scheme'. We are today inviting individuals and communities to register their interest at <http://notspots.bluenowhere.net>, so we can engage with applicants and propose a solution to extend our state of the art network into their community as soon as possible".

“Broadband has become the “4th utility” and is now as important as access to water, electricity, and gas. Those unable to take advantage of the social and economic benefits broadband offers will become increasingly excluded unless steps are taken to tackle availability. Bluenowhere is delighted to have the support of the Isle of Anglesey County Council in making available council sites to support our deployment and in their commitment to tackle digital inclusion.”

Mike Johnston, Project Director, FibreSpeed says, "Bluenowhere's commitment is only possible because of the previous investment already made in the high capacity FibreSpeed network across North Wales, as well as the willingness of Anglesey County Council to work collaboratively with Bluenowhere and FibreSpeed Limited. The Welsh Assembly Government always envisaged high-speed wireless operators being able to reach from the FibreSpeed core fibre network into areas beyond the strategic business parks, not just for businesses, but also for consumers. This is a major step forward in delivering that vision and we are delighted to be working with them.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT BLUENOWHERE

Bluenowhere Ltd is a new FibreSpeed Service Provider and has been working with FibreSpeed and the Isle of Anglesey County Council for several months on plans to roll-out a next generation broadband infrastructure for Anglesey and Môn a Menai region.

Having led extensive wireless technology trials during 2008/09, Bluenowhere Ltd has secured prime radio spectrum in North Wales and plans to deploy a state of the art wireless broadband network, on an open-access wholesale basis, providing an alternative to the existing BT infrastructure.

The network will utilise the high bandwidth FibreSpeed fibre optic network as the backbone, and distribute the capacity using the latest wireless broadband technology widely across the region.

www.bluenowhere.net / <http://notspots.bluenowhere.net>

ABOUT FIBRESPEED

FibreSpeed Ltd operates the open access fibre network that is bringing affordable high-speed communications services to businesses across North Wales, through a network of over 320km of optical fibre cabling connecting Holyhead in Anglesey through the North Wales corridor down to Wrexham and up to the UK's fibre backbone in Manchester.

The FibreSpeed project is a public-private initiative with funding from the Welsh Assembly Government, European Regional Development Funds and Geo Networks Ltd. The partners have committed £30 million of investment over 15 years.

www.fibrespeed.co.uk

ABOUT THE "BROADBAND SUPPORT SCHEME"

The Broadband Support Scheme is a Welsh Assembly initiative, aimed at those individuals, businesses and 3rd sector organisations in rural communities that do not have access to broadband at all or at speeds less than 512 kbps, known as broadband notspots.

The scheme will provide funding up to £1,000 per applicant to cover the upfront costs of purchasing a broadband solution where existing providers have been unable to provide a service.

www.wales.gov.uk/broadband

ABOUT THE 2 MEGABIT UNIVERSAL SERVICE COMMITMENT

The previous Government set out a commitment to ensure the universal availability of access to a 2 Mbps broadband connection by December 2012 in its Digital Britain report.

The new government announced last month that this commitment would be pushed back by upto 3 years to December 2015.

The body set up by the last government, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), is tendering for 3 pilot projects in specified rural communities in order to assess appropriate solutions, ahead of creating a procurement process designed to allow the government to procure solutions to meet the USC.

These pilot projects are estimated to cost between £5M and £10M each, and deployed next year, effectively delaying any action by at least 1 year.

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/bduk>