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Cardiff's Castle Quarter gets set to go superfast

Shops and businesses in the Castle Quarter of Cardiff will be able to benefit from superfast broadband speeds thanks to a partnership between the Cardiff Business Improvement District (BID) and BT.

Some of the fastest broadband speeds in the country will be made available to more than 200 businesses in the area as a result of the new Community Fibre Partnership deal.

Cardiff BID, an organisation representing local businesses in the city centre, approached BT after it became clear that the Castle Quarter was not part of any current private or public sector superfast fibre broadband roll-out plans.

The project involves funding from Cardiff BID and Openreach, BT's local network business. The funding will go to pay for the extensive engineering work that will be required to make superfast broadband available in the Castle Quarter.

Openreach plans to install Fibre-to-the-Cabinet (FTTC) technology with work due to start soon and be completed early next year.

Alwen Williams, regional director for BT Cymru Wales, said: "BT's ambition is to 'never say no' to any community that wants superfast fibre broadband connectivity and our partnership with the Cardiff BID is testimony to that."

“The more we shop and carry out other activities online the more important it is that we have fast reliable broadband connections. This technology will be a major boost to businesses in the castle quarter.

“We know the positive impact faster broadband has on the productivity and competitiveness of business and it’s great to be able to work together with Cardiff BID to find a fibre broadband solution.”

The agreement is another success for BT’s Community Fibre Partnership scheme, with more than 200 communities in the UK having signed contracts to be part of the scheme.

Adrian Field, executive director for Cardiff BID, said: “From the moment Cardiff BID was proposed, it was clear that broadband was an issue high on the business agenda, which means it had been one of our top priorities and we’re delighted to be working with BT to bring superfast broadband to this part of the city.”

“Upgrading the broadband capabilities of the Castle Quarter will have a tangible impact on businesses in the area, enabling them to operate the way you would expect from a business in the capital city, thereby helping Cardiff retain businesses and, indeed, attract new ones.

“This is a very exciting development and we’re pleased to have been able to take a lead in making it happen.”

Based on the High Street opposite Cardiff Castle, Cowshed are a PR agency already looking forward to the new superfast broadband speeds that will be made available as a result of this investment.

Vicki Spencer-Francis, founder and managing director of Cowshed, said: “We are desperate for a better connection. As a communication agency we send and receive large files daily and our current broadband speed slows down this process.”

“We work on a cloud system, including our phones and need a stable line to help us work efficiently. Poor connectivity is not only frustrating but is costing us

money. The installation of superfast broadband will mean we won't have to move out of the office we love."

Kim Mears, Openreach's managing director for infrastructure delivery, said: "Partnerships like this help us to bring high-speed connections to challenging areas that the private sector would have difficulty reaching alone.

"We are committed to making fibre broadband as widely available as possible in the UK. That's why we're investing in hundreds of similar projects across the UK, working in partnership with business and residential communities to deliver faster speeds from a wide choice of competing internet service providers.

"I have no doubt that businesses located in Cardiff's Castle Quarter will see real benefits thanks to the faster connectivity and variety of services we're delivering."

Download speeds of up to 80 megabits per second (Mbps) will be available to businesses in the Castle Quarter, enabling them to do more online and create new opportunities and fresh ways of connecting with customers.

The Openreach network offers fibre broadband access to service providers on an open, wholesale basis, so businesses have a choice of many different services from a wide range of service providers nationwide.

Further information about BT's Community Fibre Partnership is available at www.communityfibre.bt.com

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For further information

Enquiries about this news release should be made to Eurig Thomas on 029 20 667 675 or 07442 536 639 . All news releases can be accessed at our web site: <http://www.btplc.com/News>

About BT

BT's purpose is to use the power of communications to make a better world. It is one of the world's leading providers of communications services and solutions, serving customers in 180 countries. Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to its customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband, TV and internet products and services; and converged fixed-mobile products and services. BT consists of six customer-facing lines of business: Global Services, Business and Public Sector, Consumer, EE, Wholesale and Ventures, and Openreach.

For the year ended 31 March 2016¹, BT Group's reported revenue was £19,012m with reported profit before taxation of £2,907m.

British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group plc and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.

¹The results for the period have been revised to reflect the outcome of the investigation into our Italian business. Detail of which is set out in our third quarter results announcement published on 27 January 2017. This financial information is unaudited.

For more information, visit www.btplc.com

About Openreach

Openreach is the UK's leading digital infrastructure provider.

Its 32,000 employees are responsible for building and maintaining millions of miles of fibre and copper cables that connect every home and business in the UK to local telephone exchanges. Openreach operates and maintains this network to deliver a range of wholesale services for more than 560 retail providers, who in-turn provide telephony, broadband, TV and data services to more than 30 million consumer and business customers throughout the country.

Openreach is a highly regulated business, with more than 90 per cent of its revenues generated from services that are regulated by Ofcom. Any company can access its products under exactly the same prices, terms and conditions.

Over the last decade, Openreach has invested more than £10bn into its network and is currently building the UK's largest fibre broadband footprint. This technology is available to more than 26 million homes and businesses, with tens of thousands more gaining access each week.

Openreach is a wholly owned and independently governed division of the BT Group. For the year ended 31 March 2016, it reported revenues of £5.1bn.

For more information, visit openreach.co.uk