

## Rural Broadband Access Grants

### Guidance Notes and Scheme Conditions

These Guidance Notes And Scheme Conditions apply to Household applications to the Rural Broadband Access Grant Scheme provided by the West Midlands Networking Company on behalf of Advantage West Midlands.

Businesses wishing to apply for funding should access the Rabbit area of the WMNC web site <http://www.wmnc.org.uk/projects/rabbit.htm> where application forms and further details can be found.

Community applications from seven or more residents in a local area should read Section 6.

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If you require further assistance contact [RBAG@advantagewm.co.uk](mailto:RBAG@advantagewm.co.uk) or access the WMNC website at <http://www.wmnc.org.uk/>

## **Section 1.**

### **What is the scheme?**

This initiative aims to give homeowners and communities in the West Midlands the chance to access Broadband, who at the moment cannot access the Internet without using slow dial up connections, by providing grants and advice. Homeowners can obtain grants up to £3000.00 depending on the technology, towards the one off costs of installing broadband.

### **Why broadband?**

Universal access to the Internet using high speed broadband enables households to participate in the digital economy.

Applications such as Internet Banking, Telephone Calls over the Internet, E-Learning depend on reliable, high speed connections.

The rural economy can derive significant benefit from widely available broadband and communities benefit in terms of education, reduced commuting by enabling home working and access to information, resources and communication.

### **How is the scheme managed?**

The scheme is being managed by the West Midlands Networking Company, a not for profit organisation funded by the regional development agency Advantage West Midlands. WMNC is responsible for all stages of the application process.

It is up to the applicant to arrange with a supplier to install the broadband connection, after the application has been approved.

## **Section 2.**

### **What can be funded?**

Grants are available for the capital or one off costs of installing a broadband connection to the Internet via any of the UK's Internet Service Providers.

The minimum speed of connection is normally 512kbps although it may be higher.

The scheme favours the creation of community based networks where groups of neighbours join a scheme together as this usually provides the cheapest option for the end user. By reducing their ongoing monthly rental fees.

The scheme will also fund individual connections, usually by satellite if there are no other properties requiring a connection in the local area.

### **Conditions and criteria?**

The details below may change at any time without notice as the Scheme develops. WMNC reserves the right to decline an application.

The following general conditions of the Scheme apply to all applications:

- **The Postcode of the property must lie in the West Midlands area i.e. the counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire; the three unitary authorities of Herefordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Telford & Wrekin; and the seven metropolitan districts of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton**
- **The main household phone number is shown on the website <http://www.bt.com/broadband/> checker as being unsuitable for broadband, meaning that despite an engineering visit it has not been possible to provide broadband.**
- **The property is not covered by any other Rural Broadband Access Projects, for example area enablements by Avanti Broadband or Qicomm.**
- **That Cable Modem Internet Access is not available.**

The following conditions also apply:

- Applications limited to one per household
- Proof of residence is required

- The application may be treated as part of a cluster if there are several applicant within the same postcode district
- The Grant Application must be approved by WMNC before ordering broadband
- The grant is only available for new installations
- Payments will only be made against supplier invoice
- Maximum payment £3000 for capital and installation costs if any
- The grant must be claimed within six months of the Grant Offer Letter
- The applicant agrees to give access to the installation to WMNC or its representatives for inspection purposes
- The applicant agrees to give access to the installation to WMNC or its representatives for monitoring purposes
- The applicant agrees to complete follow up questionnaires from WMNC

## **Section 3.**

### **Introduction to eligible technology**

#### **Wireless**

Wireless Broadband is quite simply providing broadband access by using wireless as the medium instead of traditional cables such as copper wires, or telephone lines. There are a variety of different forms of wireless broadband including Wi-Fi and Wi-Max.

Wireless can be used for a single room, several offices, a campus, a technical park, village, town or city, up to a distance of about two kilometres. Wi-Fi is also used to provide private wireless networks in the home or office to allow resource sharing between machines, and allowing several machines to independently share existing broadband Internet connections. Speeds up to 11mbps can be achieved using Wi-Fi.

#### **Wi-Max**

A wireless technology that provides high bandwidth broadband infrastructure over long distances (up to 31 miles or 50 kilometres). Wi-MAX can provide download rates of up to 70Mbps and can be used for wireless 'hotspots', cellular backhaul and even 'last mile' broadband solutions. Wi-Max can also be used for high-speed enterprise connectivity for business. This technology is still in the early stages of development.

#### **Satellite**

Satellite is an 'always on' Internet service that sends and receives Internet content via satellite at high speed. Most satellite Internet operators, do not require customers to use a separate phone line or a separate Internet Service Provider (ISP).

#### **Leased Line**

More usually installed in Business Premises to provide always on, un-contended Internet access at speeds from 256kbps upwards. Usually an expensive option.

#### **Installers**

A Suppliers List can be found on the Rabbit pages of the WMNC Web Site at

<http://www.wmnc.org.uk/projects/rabbit.htm>.

This is a list of those suppliers so far who have provided us with information regarding their services and signified a willingness to cooperate in the project - it is not an exhaustive list and customers may choose other providers even if their details are not yet present here.

Please note that the sources given here are not recommendations. Inclusion or exclusion does not imply endorsement or otherwise of products or services. Technologies and markets are changing rapidly and solvency of individual companies cannot be guaranteed. Whilst this site has taken every reasonable care in the provision of this service, it does not guarantee the accuracy of the data supplied nor accept any responsibility for errors or omissions or their consequences.

## **Section 4.**

### **How to apply**

Send in your completed application form **BEFORE** carrying out any works to the proposed installation. Grant funds will not be payable on any works carried out prior to the date of the Grant Offer Letter. You should wait until you receive the Grant Offer Letter before signing any binding contracts with suppliers.

**Please note this application form will be revised periodically. Check the WMNC website to ensure you have the latest version.**

#### **Section A – The Applicant**

Complete all details relating to yourself, your property, your chosen supplier, and the proposed service. Provide details of the installation cost and grant applied for.

#### **Section B – The Proposed Service**

Complete details of the proposed service. Installation must meet the appropriate conditions outlined in the application form.

#### **Section C – Compliance**

All sections must be ticked to confirm that you have read the compliance terms and supplied the requested information as appropriate and the form signed.

### **How are the applications processed?**

#### **Step 1.**

Send in your completed, signed application.

#### **Step 2.**

The application will be checked to make sure it is compliant, has been fully completed and that all the required documents are attached. If anything is missing, the applicant will be contacted for further information.

#### **Step 3.**

If all the information is present and correct, the applicant will receive a Grant Offer Letter authorising work to commence.

#### **Step 4.**

When work is complete, the applicant lodges the grant claim (within six months of receiving the Grant Offer Letter), which must be accompanied by:

- Suppliers final invoice
- Commissioning form
- Warranty

Payment will be made by BACS to a bank account held by the applicant.

## **General compliance**

**WMNC may reduce, suspend, or withhold any grant payment, or require all or part of the grant to be repaid if;**

- Any information provided in the Grant Application Form or in a claim form for payment, or in subsequent or supporting correspondence, is found to be incorrect or incomplete to an extent which WMNC considers to be material;
- The applicant fails to comply with the Scheme Conditions or any other terms of the Scheme – as detailed herein, in the Application Form, or on the WMNC Website or publicity material;

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that all necessary approvals and insurances are obtained as necessary.

**The Applicant acknowledges that WMNC, nor any of their authorised representatives, accept any liability in respect of any claim or cause of action arising out of, or in relation to, any system that is the subject of funding assistance. No warranty, implied or otherwise, is given by WMNC on any aspect of the equipment, its design, installation, performance or maintenance. The applicant agrees to indemnify WMNC for any claim or liability arising out of or in relation to the system that is the subject of this grant.**

**Scheme Conditions including grant levels and qualifying requirements, may be modified at any time – although prior notice will be given to those already approved under the Scheme, but from whom we have not received an invoice. WMNC's decision shall be final and binding.**

## Section 5. Useful contacts

**Advantage West Midlands:** West Midlands Regional Development Agency  
<http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/>

**ADSL Guide:** UK's largest independent ADSL review guide  
[www.adslguide.org.uk](http://www.adslguide.org.uk)

**Broadband Checker:** comparison of broadband services from UK Internet service providers  
[www.broadbandchecker.co.uk](http://www.broadbandchecker.co.uk)

**Broadband Resource:** details ADSL & SDSL information on an exchange, regional and national basis  
[www.samknows.com](http://www.samknows.com)

**Broadband Wireless Association:** independent industry wireless association  
[www.broadband-wireless.org](http://www.broadband-wireless.org)

**Community Broadband Network:** helping communities connect  
[www.broadband-uk.coop](http://www.broadband-uk.coop)

**Get Safe Online:** a Government-sponsored website offering advice on various aspects of online security, including stopping viruses, blocking hackers and avoiding spam email  
[www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

**Internet Service Providers Association:** organisation representing ISPs  
<http://www.ispa.org.uk/>

## Section 6. Community Applications

Applications from groups of seven or more households and business premises are welcomed as WMNC will seek to aggregate demand and may be able to provide a more cost effective solution by contracting with Approved Suppliers.

Information should be collated by an individual(s) on behalf of the community and submitted to WMNC. WMNC will then determine the most effective approach.

A form for compiling the information required can be downloaded from the website. WMNC will only use this information for the purpose of obtaining a quotation for the supply of broadband service.

This should provider cheaper monthly running costs for the users of the network.