Small and medium-sized businesses across the UK are set to benefit from Openreach’s new ‘FTTP on Demand’ service, which could help them compete both at home and abroad as well as maintain and create jobs.

Aimed at the most demanding users, it supplies customers in an area currently only served by FTTC technology with an ultra-fast broadband connection directly to their home or business. That provides another option for SMEs who need higher speeds – digital media organisations being one example – and who are potentially willing to pay the extra deployment costs.

Openreach has chosen eight locations across the UK where it will pilot FTTP on Demand, which is intended to be commercially available from spring 2013. So that Openreach has enough time to address the challenges in deploying the service with its Communications Provider (CP) customers, the pilot is being held in two phases.

Phase one, which will test the planning and construction process, began in July 2012 and will run to early 2013. It will allow participating CPs to order a 330Mbps downstream and either 20 or 30Mbps upstream service in parts of High Wycombe, Bristol South, St Agnes (Cornwall) and Edinburgh.

Phase two, which will run from March to May 2013, will test new automated order processes, and focus on the 330Mbps downstream/30Mbps upstream product. This phase will see the pilot extended to parts of Watford, Cardiff, Basingstoke and Manchester Central.

CPs will assist Openreach with the installation cost. However, it will then be up to them whether to absorb that likely one-off charge, recover it through higher monthly prices or pass it on in full to their customers.
Stay up-to-speed

BT has announced to date that 172 exchanges in London will benefit from our investment in fibre broadband. In total, these exchanges serve around over 2.6 million homes and businesses.*

• 150 are already accepting orders with 6 due in December and 15 due in 2013*

* For the latest information on superfast fibre broadband availability for exchanges up and down the country visit http://www.superfast-openreach.co.uk/where-and-when/

Openreach team fires up demand for Fibre Broadband

Openreach is utilising its massive presence in local communities to highlight one of the biggest changes in communication technology.

A team within the division are offering councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) professional marketing and consultancy services to help them stimulate demand for fibre broadband. They provide various levels of support and are highly skilled at tailoring the information to both the business and consumer audience.

Services range from supplying basic marketing tools such as stickers for street cabinets and banners for web pages, linking to the hugely popular superfast http://www.superfast-openreach.co.uk, right through to full-scale project management and integrated PR activities, such as TV, radio and events.

In every area they target, the team arrange for localised flyers to be distributed by their engineers and Next Generation Access (NGA) Champions—who are all passionate about spreading the news about fibre broadband. It doesn’t stop there, on offer are design services to local groups, as well as region specific brochures and collateral. All with the aim of making residents aware that fibre broadband is available and ready for them to start enjoying the services and speeds from a number of Communication Providers.

If you are interested in working with Openreach and want to tap into their expertise in generating community awareness of fibre broadband please contact your regional partnership director Paul Bimson. Paul.bimson@bt.com or Jackie Hasted, General Manager, NGA Demand Stimulation, Jackie.hasted@openreach.co.uk.
Breaking records: London 2012

BT put in an incredible performance this summer to ensure that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games were the most connected Games ever. Plus it brought the excitement of the Games to a wider audience by hosting numerous free events that attracted millions of fans.

These activities have been noted by politicians and business leaders, who named BT as the company that has provided the greatest corporate contribution to the success of the Games (independent research by TLG/Populus). In terms of greatest positive change to a company’s reputation as a result of its sponsorship, we were placed second.

As official communications services partner of London 2012, we designed and delivered a single, integrated communications network – a first for a Summer Games – spanning 94 locations, with a critical Games-time service availability of 99.999%. To put this in context, three suppliers were used in Beijing to deliver a network with a far smaller capacity.

During the Games:

- The official London 2012 website, which we hosted, had more than 450 million visits – four times as many as the Beijing Games website in 2008.
- Our UK retail broadband network saw record levels of internet traffic. It reached an all-time high on Sunday 29 July, when the UK woke up to the Games online and Team GB won the first of its 65 medals.
- We provided services such as internet, email, fixed-line telephony and mobile services to LOCOG and the 27,500 accredited media.
- Our fibre-based network delivered TV coverage from the majority of venues to the International Broadcast Centre for transmission across the world.
- We provided the Athletes Village with the most advanced fibre broadband in the UK, allowing the athletes to get online at ultra-fast speeds for free.

As well as underpinning the delivery of the Games, we have also been one of the most active sponsors. More than five million people watched the Games at BT-sponsored Live Sites across the UK, and over one million fans attended BT London Live at Hyde Park, Victoria Park and Trafalgar Square. Around 70,000 fans watched Mo Farah’s 5,000 metre win in Hyde Park, for example, while Team GB and Paralympics GB medal winners appeared at the venues to share their success with enthusiastic audiences.

In addition, we put on dozens of free musical performances, with major acts such as Blur, the Specials and Snow Patrol thrilling huge crowds in Hyde Park at the opening and closing nights of the Olympic Games. Plus, in the lead-up to the Games, we sponsored BT River of Music, a major cultural event held at six iconic venues along the Thames which featured performers from 205 nations.

The company is also proud to have supported numerous athletes over the years. These include Jonnie Peacock, Hannah Cockcroft, Oscar Pistorius and the Brownlee brothers, to name but a few. Many of them are only just becoming household names, and so might have struggled without the financial support we provided.

Seb Coe, Chairman, LOCOG, said: “It is inconceivable that we could have delivered the 2012 Games without BT on board. We needed someone we could trust and who could provide the technical know-how and the creative solutions to ensure the London 2012 Games were the very best they could be. BT gave us all of this.”
Openreach swells ranks with ex-armed forces personnel

As it prepares to deploy even more fibre broadband infrastructure across the UK, Openreach is to recruit 400 extra engineers, with most of the new posts expected to be filled by ex-armed forces personnel. This will take the total number of engineers hired in 2012 to more than 1,000, following the employment of around 600 in the first half of the year. The new recruits will join a mobile workforce, reacting quickly to changes in service requirements from communications providers and helping to tackle peaks in demand for fibre broadband around the country. Significantly, this workforce is composed of engineers who aren’t confined to one geography, but who are instead prepared to work where the need is greatest – thereby providing greater flexibility.

Over the past two years, Openreach has taken on many hundreds of ex-armed forces personnel, and has benefited hugely from the skills, experience, flexibility and enthusiasm they have brought with them. It comes as no surprise, then, that the business is keen to fill many of these new roles with similar candidates.

Meet your new Regional Partnership Director

Prabhjot Basra has joined us as Regional Partnership Director for London, replacing Giles Ellerton.

Prabhjot comes to the team from Global Services, where she was a Senior Project Manager within the GS Health London Service Provider team.

Outside her day job, Prabhjot has also managed to complete an MBA and PhD. In addition, she is a JP and Assistant Bench Chairman in Hounslow, a Non-Executive Director of the Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust, and a Trustee of Relate in Richmond, Kingston and Hounslow. Email her at prabhjot.basra@bt.com

Fibre Broadband Showcase parks up at Parliament

The mobile Fibre Broadband Showcase was recently given a rare opportunity to visit the House of Commons in Westminster.

The Showcase demonstrates how BT installs fibre broadband – from the telephone exchange right through to a customer’s premises – and highlights the benefits it can bring to consumers, businesses and the public sector.

Its stop at Parliament gave MPs and their staff a chance to get a feel for how the network is deployed, and allowed us to reinforce the potential of fibre broadband for every constituency in the UK.

On what was a particularly busy day in Westminster, a number of key MPs visited the Showcase to see the technology in action. For the benefit of those MP and peers who could not attend on that occasion, we hope to take it back to Parliament again in the near future.