

# Leek Post & Times

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## Superfast broadband 'like having utilities'

By Leslie Jackson

les.jackson@thepostandtimes.co.uk

A HOUSING estate is set to receive superfast broadband courtesy of a Leek-based company.

Internet Connections Limited is to bring its fibre broadband to the Wainhomes estate in Leekbrook.

The project will bring speeds of up to 50Mbps to the residents of the estate.

The company said that the community was one of those to have missed out on the expansion plans of larger ISPs (Internet Service Providers) that have seen many parts of the country given access to high speed internet services.

With no feasible alternative available residents had been left to struggle with speeds of between 2-5Mbps, which is not really up to the

demands of accessing entertainment, Government services and in many cases, working – or running a business – from home.

The availability of superfast connectivity also appears to be having something of an impact on the local housing market, as highlighted by Andy Harding, managing director of Internet Connections Ltd.

Mr Harding said: "We've been contacted by people who have been interested in moving to the Leekbrook estate, keen to find out whether high speed internet access was available.

"It just goes to show how important broadband has become – almost to the point where it could be comparable with asking somebody to buy a house that doesn't have a reliable water, gas or electricity supply.

"As with our previous superfast project at St Edwards Park in Cheddleton, demand was shown to be high for the service in our planning stage.

"A pre-registration target of 50 households was soon reached, securing the feasibility of the scheme, which will see the first residents connected to the service before the end of September."

The latest initiative is an expansion to the company's project that brought superfast connectivity by the company to St Edward's Park in 2013.

Mr Harding, aged 33, who set up his company 15 years ago, said the whole idea of bringing broadband to St Edward's Park started when he and friends gathered at The Red Lion in Cheddleton.

He said: "Talk would invariably

turn to grumbling about the slow and unreliable broadband they had to live with at St Edward's Park.

"The community was so far away from the Cheddleton exchange that the cost of rolling out the fibre was simply too high.

"Then we noticed that on its journey from Manchester to Leeds, our own fibre network runs along the A520 passing the junction with the East Drive entrance to St Edward's Park."

The company then decided to leaflet residents to see if they were interested in having the system brought to their homes.

Many people replied and Internet Connections completed the work in August 2013. The business has also installed the latest technology in London, Manchester, Leeds and several other cities.