Peterborough, one of the UK’s most advanced Gigabit City projects, has been selected by CityFibre and Vodafone UK to benefit from a city-wide roll-out of full fibre infrastructure. It is the third city launched under the strategic partnership to deliver full fibre to approximately 12 cities and reaching one million homes across the UK by 2021.

CityFibre has committed to invest at least £30 million in the infrastructure project which will extend its fibre network to nearly every home and business in the city, starting in May this year.

Vodafone will use the network to bring Vodafone Gigafast Broadband to customers by early 2019. Vodafone Gigafast Broadband will offer customers ultrafast and reliable full fibre broadband at every stage of the connection from their home or workplace to the Internet. Unlike 97 per cent of today’s broadband services in the UK, Vodafone Gigafast Broadband doesn’t rely on old fashioned copper telephone lines. It is based solely on fibre-optic cables to give users a vastly superior online experience capable of Gigabit speeds (1,000 Mbps). Residents and businesses in Peterborough can pre-register for the service today at www.vodafone.co.uk/broadband/ultrafast (http://www.vodafone.co.uk/broadband/ultrafast).

According to figures from industry body Fibre to the Home Council (2014), providing full fibre to just half of all premises could result in a 1.1% rise in annual GDP. When applied to Peterborough, the city-wide fibre roll-out could unlock huge economic growth exceeding £700 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) over the next 15 years.

Peterborough is already making full use of the arterial fibre network built by CityFibre in 2013 following the award of a major public-sector contract. Most schools, council offices and the main hospital currently benefit from full fibre access, and recently, high-definition CCTV and traffic management cameras were added to the network. Hundreds of businesses are already connected and benefitting from access to affordable Gigabit speed services. The network’s extension will bring fibre within reach of thousands more.

John Holdich OBE, Leader of Peterborough City Council responded to the announcement: "We welcome CityFibre and Vodafone’s decision to choose Peterborough as one of the first cities in their fibre-to-the-premises roll-out. Peterborough City Council has worked closely with CityFibre for years to develop and expand the reach of their full fibre network. It has become a platform for our Smart City initiatives, helps us attract businesses and develop our emerging tech sector. With this extension of the project, the full benefits will soon be felt by everyone who lives and works in the city."

Vodafone UK Chief Executive Nick Jeffery said: "We want to reinvent the home broadband experience. We were the first broadband provider to abolish line rental, we now guarantee line speeds, and from next year, we will offer customers in Peterborough Vodafone Gigafast Broadband. It will revolutionise the way people live and work, from better home entertainment, to remote healthcare monitoring and improved student access to core educational services. I am delighted that Peterborough is poised to become a UK digital leader."

Greg Mesch, Chief Executive at CityFibre said: “Peterborough is the perfect demonstration of the benefits a third competitive digital infrastructure brings the UK market. Our network has delivered superior services, at a lower cost than BT Openreach. It has fuelled economic growth, innovation and inward investment and paved the way for us to bring full fibre to the entire city. Lessening dependence on BT Openreach and Virgin is not only good for Peterborough, its residents and businesses, it is critical for the UK as a whole.”
Economic benefits to Peterborough

Ubiquitous access to full fibre across the city will unlock a range of economic benefits across the public and private sectors. A recent study published by economic development consultancy Regeneris examined the potential economic impact of full fibre access in 100 towns and cities over a 15-year period.

The report identified the potential for up to £55m GVA growth in business productivity, innovation and access to new markets in Peterborough, while a further £25m in growth could be driven from encouraging new business start-ups.

Peterborough’s homeowners and wider property market can also expect to reap rewards from the roll-out. With access to reliable, high speed broadband becoming ever-more important to buyers, the report suggests that up to £45m could be added to the value of homes in the city.

The economic impacts unlocked by full fibre roll-outs will extend much further. Full fibre is an essential platform for the inevitable roll-out of 5G, which could mean around £293m in economic growth to Peterborough over the next 15 years. The Internet of Things and Industry 4.0, could drive as much as £106m in benefits and wider Smart City enablement, from infrastructure and services to smart energy networks, could add £54m.