

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

CASE STUDY

Point Topic worked with Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd to ensure Colchester Borough Council (CBC) became the first authority in East Anglia to secure funding from the Third Wave of the Government’s Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme.

DELIVERING THE ANSWERS

Point Topic produced a number of deliverables to meet these requirements:

1. A full detailed map of the entire borough showing the current deployment of next generation access technology (FTTC, FTTP and FTTP on demand)
2. Mapping of the five-year conversion and take up of gigabit enabling technologies, such as G.fast, Docsis 3.1, leased lines and FTTP on demand
3. A guide to the key economically viable locations for fibre deployment in the borough, with a narrative on the drivers for and impediments against, conversation to NGA technologies
4. A narrative of the likely economic benefits and employment uplifts of NGA conversion.

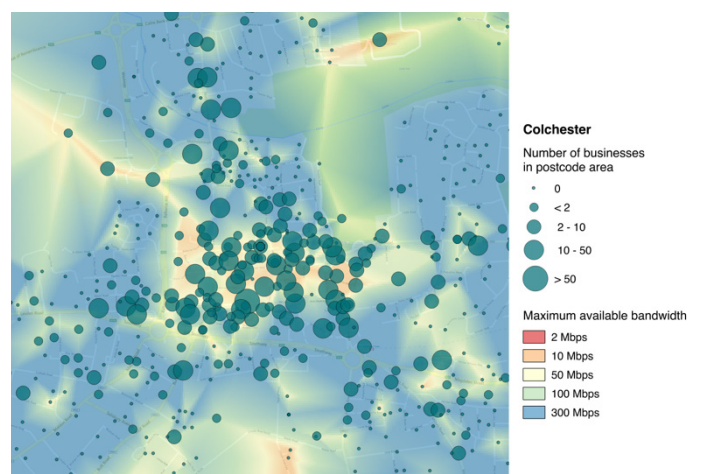
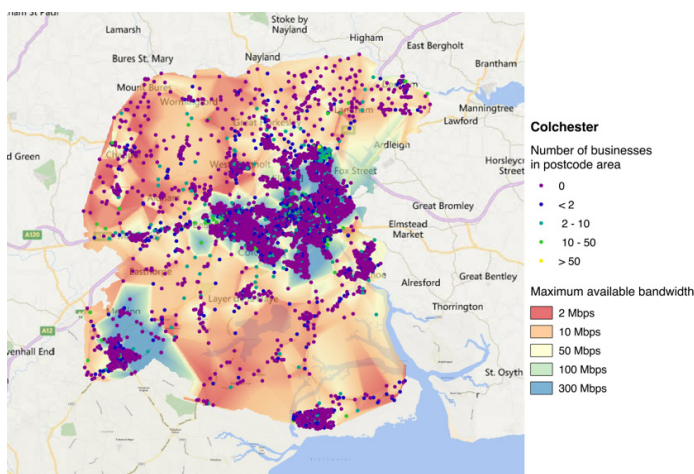
This work helped provide evidence that availability of modern broadband networks will help bolster inward investment and the attractiveness of Colchester to data-rich and creative businesses, predicted to grow Colchester’s economy by six per cent, worth more than £230 million.



PROJECT OUTLINE

In early 2018 CBC requested a review of the status of broadband availability, take-up and related socio-demographic data to augment its own information sets to focus on a LFFN Wave 3 central funding submission.

Feedback on CBC’s Wave 2 submission indicated that a much stronger evidence base needed to be demonstrated ahead of the Wave 3 re-submission. Colchester Amphora Trading therefore commissioned a detailed survey on behalf of CBC from Point Topic to provide data on several elements of the borough’s telecommunications market.



ACHIEVING THE RIGHT RESULTS

On 7 February 2019 CBC announced it had been awarded the full £3.45 million requested from DCMS under the LFFN Wave 3 application. Businesses and residents across a large part of the town are set to benefit from new ultrafast broadband networks as a result.

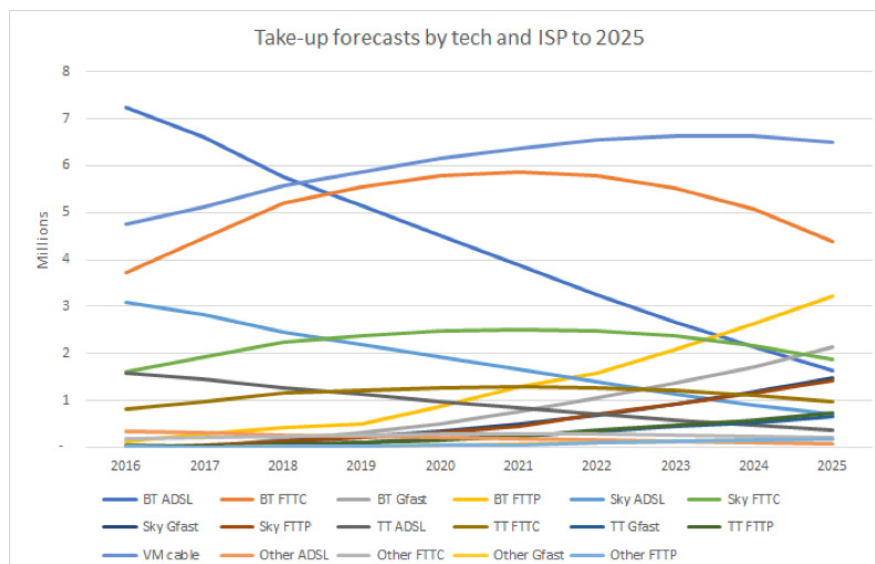
Businesses in Colchester town centre can already access ultrafast broadband because of the council's deployment since 2016 of a new fibre infrastructure, for which it was awarded the 2017 EU Broadband Award for good practice.

The new networks will cover the whole of central Colchester, the Northern Gateway and provide links to Greenstead, Severalls Business Park and the Hythe. They will be expandable and capable of reaching the rural two-thirds in future, as funding allows.

This is one of the highest-profile projects to have been undertaken by the council's new commercial company Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd, tasked with managing the funding bid and overseeing deployment on behalf of CBC. The technical design of the new networks is now well advanced, with initial works underway and focused delivery due to begin in September 2019.

“Point Topic's contribution and assistance with this has been massively helpful and is greatly appreciated. The seriousness and solidity of the background research really helped us get this over the line.”

- Steven Eke, Senior Development Manager (Digital Sector Lead) for Colchester Amphora Trading



TAKING FLEXIBLE APPROACH

Point Topic leveraged its experience and partnerships in order to deliver this project.

Work was undertaken by Oliver Johnson, CEO of Point Topic, and Annelise Berendt, Principal Associate, as project lead. Data for the analysis came from Point Topic and Thinkbroadband with notable inputs from Ofcom as well as the full range of UK ISPs, independent and interested parties. Point Topic also brought in long standing partner Adroit Economics, to detail the economic benefits and uplift, leveraging the expertise of Steve Sheppard.

Point Topic understood the need for flexible and iterative working. It ensured the requirements laid out in the “DCMS Local Full Fibre Network Fund Wave 3 Submission (Steering Group Report)” were addressed, and that allowance was made for DCMS briefings and incorporation of feedback into any final deliverables.

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