

# Press Release

16<sup>th</sup> February 2004

## Strike up the broadband in West Sussex

**The *Connecting West Sussex Partnership* officially launched a drive to accelerate the arrival of high-speed broadband across West Sussex on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February. The Partnership sees the public and private sector working together to bring over £2m of investment into the County. The initiative will help businesses become more competitive, by increasing the use of high speed internet connections to improve skills and increase flexible working for people and communities.**

Partners in the project, led by the West Sussex Economic Partnership (WSEP), include West Sussex County Council, The Business Link for Sussex, BT and the South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA).

As a demonstration of its commitment to the initiative's success, BT will bring forward its investment in Arundel, Pulborough and Cowfold exchanges, which will be enabled on 31<sup>st</sup> March – supplying 5,350 households and 840 businesses. In addition, BT has recently confirmed that Bolney, Sharpthorne and Birdham exchanges will also be switched on as scheduled on 31<sup>st</sup> March, covering a further 3,270 households and 460 businesses.

**/more**

## **2/”Strike up the broadband in West Sussex”**

Alistair Smith, WSEP’s Chief Executive, says: “WSEP’s challenge is to help raise competitiveness and productivity, as well as encouraging enterprise in West Sussex. Broadband access is seen as a catalyst for increasing economic prosperity, skills and business growth. By connecting more businesses, micro-businesses and homeworkers, we can achieve our ambition.” His view was endorsed by John de Groot, Chief Executive of The Enterprise Centre representing Business Link for Sussex: “More importantly, increased availability will help greatly in unlocking the entrepreneurial spirit of small business across West Sussex.”

“The Government has promised to make the UK the most competitive broadband market among the G7 countries,” says Mike Coleman, West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Information Services. “One of its key advisory groups says Britain is on target to give every community broadband access by next year. The County Council is playing a significant role in achieving that goal in West Sussex.”

Patricia Vaz, BT regional director for the South East said: “BT is committed to working with the public and private sectors to develop awareness and extend availability and take-up of broadband throughout the UK. Here we have the partners who can make the big difference and ensure we all bring the benefits of new-wave broadband communications to businesses, individuals and communities. The public sector has a key role to play in improving people’s awareness and understanding of ICT, e-commerce and broadband so all players are encouraged to make broadband available sooner rather than later.”

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### 3\”Strike up the broadband in West Sussex”

#### **Editors Note:**

- Two examples of how broadband has helped West Sussex business are attached.
- Broadband’s high speed and high capacity eliminates the frustrating delays while large files and graphics download. It is ‘always on’ and the fixed monthly charges mean users no longer worry about running up charges on-line.
- Broadband operates at much higher speeds than a standard internet connection with consumer products typically 10 times faster and business products up to 40 times faster. Products use a variety of different technologies and can be ordered from a range of service providers.
- BT will have invested around £22m by 2005 in setting up a total of 35 public/private partnerships across the UK to bring broadband to areas where exchanges have not been enabled.
- For information about broadband, contact “Connecting West Sussex” on [info@wsep.org.uk](mailto:info@wsep.org.uk)

***For further information, please contact:***

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