Superconnected Cities Scheme Helps 14,000 Small Businesses

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The Government's Superconnected Cities programme has seen more than 14,000 small businesses benefit from broadband grants of up to £3,000 to date, figures published today reveal. In addition, free public Wi-Fi has now been installed in more than 1,000 buildings, as well as being made available on buses, trams and trains in many cities across the UK. The programme was designed to help cities develop the digital infrastructure they to remain internationally competitive and attractive places to invest, visit and do business.

Culture Secretary Sajid Javid said:

"It's vital that our cities have the digital infrastructure like superfast broadband and wifi in place to deal with the demands of the digital age. Our investment has delivered a welcome boost to the local economies, and is all part of our long term economic plan."

The programme has also:

- Created an internet exchange in Cardiff improving broadband resilience and supporting firms and infrastructure across south wales.
- Built a Digital Exchange in Brighton connecting up high tech digital clusters on the south coast with London and the world.
- Built a £1m cloud computing centre in Newcastle at the university helping the city become a centre of excellence.
- Funded a unique £4m smart city test bed in Bristol focussed on business innovation and machine to machine communications that will shape services and products of the future.
- Established demonstrators in a number of cities including Edinburgh, Bristol, Cardiff, Manchester and Derby, which offer local businesses the opportunity to use cutting edge technology to develop their business products and services.

The broadband grant element of the programme (originally due to finish on 31 March 2015) has been so popular that the offer has now been extended, and is being offered to an additional 28 UK cities. The broadband grants provide up to £3,000 towards the installation costs, and many businesses are also opting to apply as a group to connect bigger or more complicated premises. Once installed, businesses pay the line rental and VAT.

Businesses in eligible cities can apply online.

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