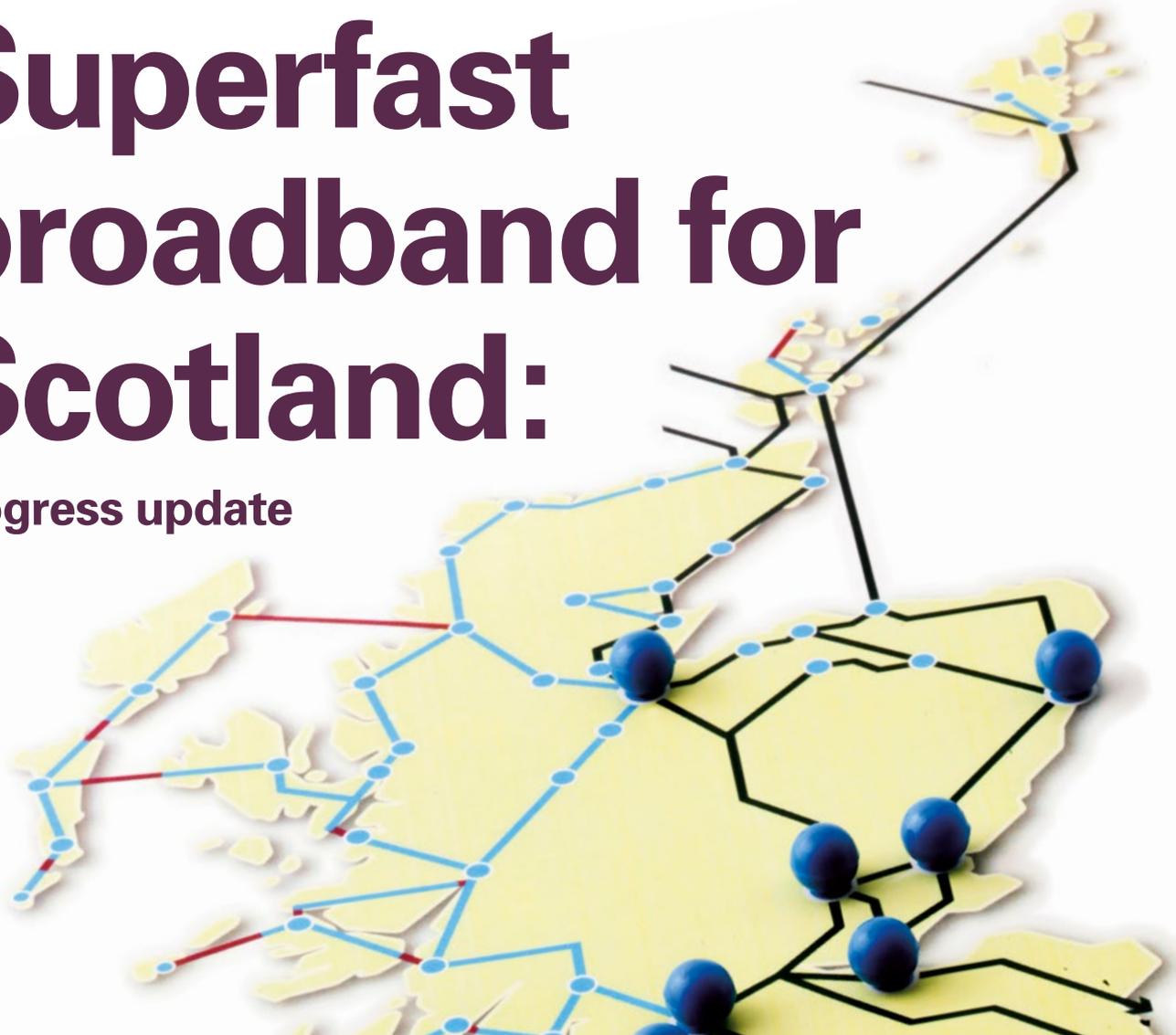


## Project scope

# Superfast broadband for Scotland:

## Progress update



AUDITOR GENERAL 

Prepared by Audit Scotland  
May 2018

### Background

The Scottish Government has committed to delivering a future-proofed infrastructure that will provide world-class digital connectivity across the whole of Scotland by 2021, enabling anyone in Scotland to connect and communicate instantly using any device, anywhere, anytime. As part of this commitment, the Scottish Government and Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) contracted BT through two contracts, to deliver superfast broadband access to 95 per cent of premises in Scotland by December 2017. In 2017, the Scottish Government announced additional investment of £600 million to reach 100 per cent coverage.

We have previously published two reports (February 2015 and August 2016) examining the procurement of the contracts, and the progress being made in rolling-out superfast broadband and towards the Scottish Government's wider world-class digital ambition.<sup>1,2</sup>

Our August 2016 update report found that the Scottish Government and HIE had made good progress in the roll-out of fibre broadband in Scotland to date. However, the roll-out had concentrated on easier-to-reach areas and many premises across Scotland could still not get speeds of 10 Mb/s. We highlighted four priorities for the Scottish Government to develop to achieve its vision of a world-class digital infrastructure:

- The finalisation of clear plans setting out how 100 per cent access to superfast broadband is to be achieved, so that no communities are digitally excluded.
- Considering how best to use digital technologies and build a world-class digital infrastructure fit for the future.
- Considering how best to continue to encourage take-up to ensure the benefits of investment are maximised.
- Improving public reporting of progress and performance, to measure the benefits achieved from its investment and to allow benchmarking with other countries.

We committed to providing an update on the Scottish Government's progress in 2018.

### Why is this audit important?

Digital connectivity is essential for economic growth, transforming service delivery and social development. Businesses benefit from better productivity when they have a good broadband connection and communities can be more included in society when they can access online services.

The public continues to express interest in the roll-out of superfast broadband and the speeds being achieved.

### What will the audit look at?

We plan to publish a short report examining the Scottish Government's progress towards its world-class ambitions. The report will:

- report on delivery of the two contracts with BT and whether contractual targets were met. This will include the coverage and speeds achieved under the contracts, total spend and any claw-back funding realised
- consider what the Scottish Government is doing to extend superfast broadband to 100 per cent of

premises, including the procurement of the next round of contracts under what is known as the R100 project

- consider the Scottish Government's progress towards its wider ambitions of a world-class digital infrastructure.

### How will we carry out the audit?

To produce the report, we will:

- review documents such as project progress reports and papers and implementation plans
- interview representatives from the Scottish Government, HIE project teams and the Scottish Futures Trust
- liaise with key stakeholders including Ofcom and use benchmarking data from their work, where appropriate.

### What impact will it have?

This audit will fulfil our commitment to provide an update in 2018 on the delivery of the two contracts and progress towards the Scottish Government's world-class vision. We will provide assurance on whether the two contracts have met their objectives and highlight any potential risks for the next stage.

### Timetable and contact

We aim to do the majority of our data collection and analysis in May and June, and publish the report in August 2018.

For further information contact Graeme Greenhill, Senior Audit Manager on 0131 625 1822 or [ggreenhill@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:ggreenhill@audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

- 1 [Superfast broadband for Scotland: A progress report](#)   
Auditor General for Scotland, February 2015
- 2 [Superfast broadband for Scotland: A progress update](#)   
Auditor General for Scotland, August 2016



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