**Homes and businesses turning to independent**

**providers for broadband connectivity, new report reveals**

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 0000 TUESDAY 14 JUNE**

More than 5.5 million homes and businesses in the UK can now connect to an independent fibre broadband network, according to new figures published today. For the first time, the total number of live connections provided by the ‘alt nets’ is above 1m.

Compiled for the Independent Networks Co-operative Association (INCA) by Point Topic using data provided by independent network operators across the country, this year’s ‘*Metrics for the UK independent network sector*’ report shows that the sector has again doubled in size over the previous year.

The independent sector continues to pull in significant sums of private funding with investment and expenditure commitments predicted to reach £17.7bn by the end of 2025. When combined with the £12bn announced by BT Group, the £5bn announced by government, and £2bn planned by VM02, investment levels will exceed the previous estimates of £30bn for bringing next generation networks to every property in the UK.

INCA’s Chief Executive, Malcolm Corbett said: “This continued high level of investment, coupled with commitments from others in the private sector like BT and Virgin Media, and the money being put in by government, shows that the UK is on track, for the first time in its history, to have proper broadband infrastructure competition. Independent network operators are a key piece of this connectivity jigsaw which will offer consumers real choice and drive innovation in the broadband services they consume.”

The report also details operators’ concerns, which include;

* planning and streetworks delays
* the threat of overbuild from taxpayer-funded, Project Gigabit procurements
* delivery times for services from Openreach or other operators (e.g., EAD circuits, PIA)
* getting wayleaves
* the impact of BDUK's pause on community-led ISPs Gigabit Vouchers; and
* access to skills and labour.

“This report shows the increasing maturity of the independent broadband sector”, commented INCA Chairman, Alex Blowers. “It is now transitioning from fundraising and planning mode to delivery and execution stage and is undeniably a key partner in the delivery of a 21st century digital UK. It is now crucial that the government and Ofcom ensure momentum is maintained, by evolving the underlying policy and regulatory framework in support of the infrastructure competition that has now arrived in the UK,” Mr Blowers continued.

The full report can be viewed at- <https://www.inca.coop/2022-altnet-metrics>.

For more information about their work or of INCA in general, please visit: <https://www.inca.coop/>.

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**Notes to editors**

About INCA

The Independent Networks Co-operative Association (INCA) was established in 2010 as a co-operative trade association for next generation broadband services. INCA brings together the most innovative thinkers in the independent alternative network sector, creating new digital infrastructure in the UK and Ireland. For more information about INCA, please visit: <https://www.inca.coop/>.

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