

# Broadband specialist Alncom to ramp up rural connections with eight-figure funding

A North East rural broadband business is set to accelerate ultrafast connections in the region after securing funding worth more than £10m from investors.

Alncom, based in Alnwick, has received an eight-figure funding boost from strategic investors including Northumberland Estates, to be split with telecom specialist Railsite Telecom, in moves aimed at rapidly expanding its work in Northumberland.

The company offers rural broadband and IT solutions to off-grid, isolated areas – with successes including Ingram Valley, College Valley, Powburn and Ellingham – using its fleet of off-road vehicles, including a driverless cable plow, which can rapidly install fibre optic cables.

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Alncom's work to connect communities in remote parts of the region has already seen it launch a recruitment drive to create 40 new jobs. Now Alncom directors say the funding will aid moves to accelerate ultrafast broadband connections from 25,000 to 50,000 rural premises in the region.

Managing director Stephen Pinchen said: "Having passed over 10,000 premises ahead of schedule and connecting over 2,500 customers, it was vital to secure additional funding from our shareholders to accelerate the growth and increase the target from 25,000 to 50,000 premises.

"Mostly utilising in-house build teams has been the key to the

speed of our roll out. We have also deployed a fast-track apprentice and training scheme that is in full flow, increasing jobs and opportunities in the region.

“The workforce are feeling valued in a difficult economy and It has been immensely gratifying to deliver personal development to the team, with the plus of such a positive impact on rural communities.”

Alncom also announced a new social tariff of £15 per month for a full fibre connection and hope to support the most vulnerable families in the communities so that school children have a chance to continue their studies at home.

CEO of Northumberland Estates Rory Wilson said: “We are delighted with the continued success of the Northumberland Estate’s investment. In one of the most rural regions in the United Kingdom, it’s essential that the economy is supported with good communications. It has offered life-changing benefits to the farming community, those working from home, families and isolated individuals and businesses.”

Rothbury councillor Steven Bridgett added: “Alncom has started expanding its services further into Coquetdale which we very much welcome. Not only because it offers residents and businesses more choice and better value for money when selecting their providers but Alncom is working with local communities to improve connectivity in the aftermath of recent storms, the results of which will benefit everyone living in this area.”

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