

The multi billion pound Boris internet fund that has barely been touched

THREE years ago [Boris Johnson](#) unveiled a £5 billion [fund](#) that would get the fastest [internet](#) into rural locations and other hard to reach places, part of his levelling up strategy.

Project Gigabit was going to get 100% [broadband](#) coverage by 2025.

How much of this fund has been spent? According to telecom insiders: £0. Nothing. Nada.

Government agents dispute this, though they decline to be specific.

But even if they are right that awards in the tens of millions have been handed out, on a percentage basis that is still pretty close to zero.

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What's going on?

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport has been drawing up local and regional rural lots for network builders such as Openreach, Virgin Media O2 and other smaller players.

They are piecemeal and some are tiny, covering only a few thousand premises.

On a commercial basis, they don't make much sense and you might have expected push back from the industry on that basis.

The pity is that the bigger players in the telecom sector are up for it – they have told Boris they will do his bidding even at a loss to their own companies.

The problem is with the government part of the operation, which just goes clunk.

One insider said: "The internet would be fast, were the process not so slow."

Fewer than 10 lots have been put out to tender so far, I'm told.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez notes: "We've put more cash into broadband rollout than any government in British history."

That's true. But this bit of it just isn't working.

This isn't the PM's fault. He had the vision and willingness to commit the money. He will probably be shocked to hear how little of it has been spent.