



Mr Jonathan Djanogly MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

06 April 2010

Dear Jonathan,

Thank you for your letter of 05 March 2010 to Ian Livingston regarding broadband speeds in rural locations. Ian has asked that I reply.

By way of background, our investment in broadband technology has meant that we have put over 99% of all businesses and households within the reach of a broadband enabled exchange - the highest ADSL availability of all the G8 countries. We are proud of this achievement and want to provide the best possible broadband service to all who want it.

We do appreciate the frustration of some customers at not being able to receive the broadband speeds they require. The actual speed a customer will get once they have ordered broadband will depend on a number of other factors. These include the condition, length and type of wiring at the customer's premises and the efficiency of the customer's PC. Fitting an I-Plate to a telephone socket can filter out interference from the home phone wiring to help achieve faster broadband speeds. Our advertising is clear that actual speeds may vary, stating that customer's can receive speeds of 'up to' 8 Mb.

However, despite all these factors, the ADSL technology used to provide broadband is designed to work over copper cables, is distance dependent and requires a suitable line quality to work effectively. The reason for this is that if you put a signal down a cable, the signal will get weaker as the cable gets longer. This is referred to as line loss. This line loss is greater at higher frequencies. ADSL broadband works on much higher frequencies than the ordinary telephone service, so the length of line over which a satisfactory signal can be passed is shorter for ADSL broadband than for ordinary telephone service.

We continue to seek solutions to improve speed on all copper lines. As you may be aware, one of the proposals of the Government's Digital Britain is a minimum 2 M/bits across the UK by 2012. We will look at the details of this and will explore all options that might bring higher speeds to more of our customers.

Many broadband service providers also offer wireless or satellite broadband products, more information on which can be found at the following websites:
<http://www.ispreview.co.uk/index.shtml>
<http://www.ispreview.co.uk/cgi-bin/listman/exec/satellite.shtml>

In addition, all the major mobile phone operators now offer broadband services over their own networks.

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Without specific telephone numbers of the residents affected, I am unable to comment on individual broadband speeds that some of your constituents may be receiving. However, I would encourage any of your constituents who are concerned about the speed of their broadband to contact their ISP in the first instance and they will be able to carry out tests to ascertain if anything can be done to improve their broadband speeds. Alternatively, please do pass ask your office to pass me any specific phone numbers of your constituents affected by this issue and we will be able to investigate these numbers further.

More widely, BT is currently investing £1.5 billion to make fibre-based broadband available to 40 per cent of the UK - or some 10 million homes - by summer 2012. This is the UK's biggest single commercial investment in fibre-based broadband. We sent you a copy of the recent press release announcing that Huntingdon, St Ives and St. Neots telephone exchanges in your constituency have been included in the latest exchanges announced in the super fast fibre broadband roll-out. We estimate that around 27000 customers in these areas, many of whom are in your constituency, will benefit. When we have done detailed planning work and obtained planning consent to install the new street cabinets required, we will be able to give more detail about the areas which will be covered.

Super-fast fibre-broadband will allow customers to run several bandwidth hungry applications at the same time. For example, some members of the family could be watching different high definition (HD) films while others are gaming online or using complex graphics or video applications. Super-fast broadband will allow customers to quickly post videos and pictures online and to enjoy services HD services such as video conferencing and gaming to the full.

I hope I have helped to clarify BT's position on this matter. If you require any further information, please do let me know.

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