

CMS 197690/mk



department for
**culture, media
and sport**

Mr Jonathan Djanogly MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

1 February 2012

Dear Jonathan

SUPERFAST BROADBAND

I am writing to update you on the progress being made on local broadband projects, as part of our strategy for achieving the best superfast broadband in Europe by 2015.

Ensuring widespread availability of high speed broadband is a key part of our strategy for building economic growth, and will also offer benefits to consumers and for the delivery of public services. We therefore need to complete delivery quickly. I am delighted that the existing providers such as BT and Virgin Media support this objective. BT, for example, has brought forward its target for achieving superfast coverage for two-thirds of the country to 2014.

To take delivery further, the Government has committed £530m over the life of this parliament to support broadband implementation. With a similar level of local match funding, we believe this support will be sufficient to extend superfast coverage to 90% of premises and ensure universal standard broadband.

As you may recall, we have asked English local authorities and the Devolved Administrations to lead local broadband projects in their areas. In order to ensure delivery by 2015, I have set local bodies a target of completing procurements by the end of this year. I have also set interim targets for all local projects to submit draft Local Broadband Plans by the end of February, to have these approved by my team in Broadband Delivery UK by the end of April, and to be ready to begin procurement by the end of July.

To help ensure transparency and visibility of progress, I will be publishing on a monthly basis a table of progress being made by local projects. I have just published the first version of this table, showing progress with Local Broadband Plans. This is can be viewed on the broadband pages of DCMS web site, or at the link at the end of

this letter. 15 of the local projects have now had their plans approved. Of the remaining 32 projects, 16 have been rated as 'high confidence' that the timetable will be met, with 13 rated as 'medium confidence' and three as 'little confidence'.

Whilst the overall picture is good, we must maintain the momentum. I am requesting urgent meetings with the local authority leaders for those projects that are currently rated as 'little confidence'.

In addition to the existing funding, the Department for Communities and Local Government has just published new guidance for broadband projects applying for funding from the European Regional Development Fund. This will give greater certainty to local authorities bidding for money to help cover their broadband plans and will help unlock potential European funding of around £100m across England.

I hope that you will continue to support broadband delivery and encourage further action if your area is falling behind with its plans.

Link to table:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Ah3sVRjT82kKdFVmSHE4azRWS1dYNVEyNDJWeXlqcmc#gid=0>

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport