



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref :

Darren Millar AM
Chair
Public Accounts Committee

17 July 2015

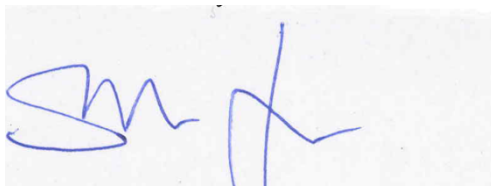
Dear Mr Millar

**Public Accounts Committee - Welsh Government Investment in Next Generation
Broadband Infrastructure**

Further to my appearance before your committee on 7 July please find attached the additional information requested by the Committee.

The Welsh Government accepts all of the recommendations in the Wales Audit Office report. James Price's letter of 1 July sets out the Welsh Government position on the recommendations. The only detail to add is that in her oral statement of 7 July, the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology outlined a take-up target of 50 per cent by 2024 and that BT have indicated that the Fibre on Demand product will be available to the majority of premises by the end of the summer.

Yours sincerely



Simon Jones
Deputy Director, ICT Infrastructure

Public Accounts Committee meeting 7 July 2015

Further information requested.

A list of locations where issues of access have been difficult for Openreach.

Discussions with landowners on wayleave issues are a normal part of BT Openreach day to day activities and in the majority of cases a satisfactory agreement is reached. While there have been issues in connection with wayleaves during the project at present there are no wayleave issues that have been contractually notified by BT as insurmountable. There are of course a small number of areas where negotiations have been protracted but we would not want to name these until all avenues to find a resolution have been exhausted. This would be at the point where BT formally advise Welsh Government that they are unable to find a solution and therefore that the affected premises would need to be de-scoped from the contract.

What the Welsh Government expects to be delivered as part of the £1.7m marketing budget and how it is used on a geographical basis.

The delivery of communications and marketing activity is set out in a communications and engagement strategy agreed between Welsh Government and BT.

The strategy was reviewed in the summer of 2014 and subsequently revised to reflect changing priorities. The information below is based on the revised strategy.

The aims, objectives and strategy set out are as follows:

Aim

To support the success of the Superfast Cymru programme through the provision of timely, accurate and credible communications and engagement activity.

Objectives

- Raise awareness of Superfast Cymru among key audiences by providing up to date and credible information about the programme, the roll-out process and timescales.
- Engage regularly with key stakeholders so they are well informed and champion the project.
- Encourage take-up of fibre broadband in the Superfast Cymru intervention area by highlighting the benefits that the project will bring to households in Wales.
- Outline the benefits to Wales and Welsh society, economically and socially of the investment being made in superfast broadband.
- Highlight the benefits to third and public sector organisations of using and delivering services through fast fibre.

The Strategy

To deploy a range of communications and engagement activities to inform households and, third and public sector bodies about the programme, highlight the benefits it will bring to them and to Wales and engage with them to secure their support where necessary.

Action

The activity required to deliver the strategy is broadly as follows:

- Marketing
- Press and PR
- Internal communications
- Local and business advertising
- Stakeholder engagement

Specific activity includes.

- Superfast Cymru website
- Social media – twitter and Facebook
- Press and PR activity
- Marketing collateral – door drops, posters, leaflets, information packs
- Bespoke branding for Superfast Cymru and branding materials – cabinet stickers, cabinet wraps, van livery
- Local authority engagement
- Engagement activity – third sector bodies, community leaders, local events
- Social media advertising
- Radio advertising
- Local ambient advertising
- Press advertising
- Major event attendance – Royal Welsh Show, Anglesey Show, Pembrokeshire Show and Caerphilly Big Cheese
- Event sponsorship

Geographic spread

It is difficult to split the budget geographically as a number of key items are pan Wales or pan regional for example major press advertising and radio advertising, some press and PR activity.

However, under the current strategy the activity tracks the deployment; local activity begins in an area just ahead of deployment and then continues once deployment is in place. The communications activity is designed to be a repeatable process across every new area with essentially the same activity broadly taking place in every area and hence the budget is in essence spread relatively evenly across the country.

Rugby

With regards to the rugby related activity, advertising hoardings at games, shirt sponsorship and the use of regional rugby players in PR activity, this is free to the project as a result of the relationship between the project and BT Sport. A small amount of funding has been used on supporting PR activity.

Permitted development rights – telecommunications cabinets

Telecommunications cabinets are covered by permitted development rights. In November 2014 permitted development rights were liberalised in respect of fixed broadband apparatus on article 1(5) land (National Parks and AONBs) so that cabinets are no longer subject to prior approval by local authorities and are permitted subject to the developer giving one month's notice to Natural Resources Wales and the National Park Authority; and subject to their appearance.

Roll out of Fibre-on-Demand.

The Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology highlighted that through negotiations with BT in Wales “Fibre on Demand” will be available across the majority of the country. This is a business-focussed ultrafast broadband technology, which will be available by the end of summer 2015 to the majority of premises in Wales.

Location of where additional contracts will be required following the anticipated announcement on ‘Infill Stage 2’

Those areas that will not be covered by the Superfast Cymru project, including the extra premises announced by the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology on 7 July, or commercial roll-outs (taken together those previously described as falling within infill stage 2) will be addressed through three routes. The new Access Broadband Cymru scheme highlighted by the Deputy Minister, community dig projects where communities use a combination of public and private sector support to develop local schemes or through re-investment of clawback funding secured through the contract.

As highlighted at the committee meeting on 7 July we do not yet know with absolute certainty where those premises will be. Until we have that certainty it could be potentially misleading to release any information about where those premises may be.