

BT calls for Scottish support for largest ever investment in super-fast broadband



BT has urged the Scottish government and other public sector bodies to grasp a unique opportunity to bring super-fast broadband to Scotland.

A £1.5 billion BT plan to roll out fibre-based broadband will result in a range of speeds up to 100Mb/s becoming available for up to 10 million UK homes by 2012.

Areas showing the greatest commitment to using the new services will benefit first, as BT will focus investment in places where there is a strong public sector interest in partnering with the company.

The investment – the largest of its kind ever seen in the UK – forms part of BT's wider strategy of delivering next generation broadband services

nationwide. Much of the UK is already set to receive advanced new copper-based broadband services of up to 24Mb/s – up to three times the headline speeds currently available for most homes and businesses.

Brendan Dick, director of BT Scotland, said: "Scotland is already a tremendous broadband success story and this is a great opportunity for the nation to be on the front page of the next chapter.

"BT is keen to invest further in Scotland so I am urging the Scottish public sector

to work with us to ensure the funds are directed here.

"We want to partner with people who share our vision for the next phase of the broadband revolution. There is no predetermined single model, but we are keen to explore, for example, ways in which local demand can be created or stimulated to help shape and direct our investments.

"Our aim is that urban and rural areas alike will benefit – so this is a big opportunity for all parts of Scotland."

He added: "Scotland has a clear agenda for economic growth and today's announcement has huge potential to enhance its capabilities and help the Scottish Government deliver its five strategic objectives. This is a bold step by BT – and we need others to be just as bold."

Fibre-based broadband will initially offer a range of speeds up to 100Mb/s with the potential for speeds of up to 1000Mb/s in the future. The new services will give customers enough speed to run multiple bandwidth-hungry applications and offer substantially improved "upstream" speeds.

Across the UK, BT already provides fibre to the premises of more than 120,000 businesses, and has deployed more than 10 million kilometres of fibre in the network.

The company added that a supportive and enduring regulatory environment was essential for the investment to take place.

Questions and Answers

Which areas will benefit first from this investment?

BT Scotland will work with Government, development agencies and other public sector bodies on the roll-out plans. They can help ensure there is demand for fibre and so we look forward to working with them to ensure our roll-out is demand-driven. Our aim is that both urban and rural areas will be able to benefit.

How can public sector bodies register their interest?

The BT Scotland team will be contacting regional partners over the coming days.

Is there a deadline for public sector bodies to register their interest?

There is no formal deadline, but clearly as time passes our investment will become increasingly committed and the capacity to take on more will be correspondingly reduced.

How will BT judge the merits of the expressions of interest it receives?

This is a commercial deployment so the options most attractive to BT will be those where risk or cost are most reduced. We are open to suggestions from regional partners and happy to discuss, for example, models of deployment against committed demand, demand generation partnership or contributions to build costs (subject to State Aid rules).

Leading lady takes helm

Business leader Shonaig Macpherson is the new chair of the BT Scotland board.

She takes over from current chairman Iain Robertson, former chief executive of the Royal Bank of Scotland's corporate banking and financial markets division, who has stepped down after serving his four-year term.



Shonaig is chairman of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry and deputy president of the British Chambers of Commerce.

She said: "BT Scotland is a key player in the national economy so I'm very proud to have been asked to chair the board. I know the company well, having served for several years as an executive member of the Scottish board, and I'll be working hard to build on the success we have already achieved."

Shonaig is the third chair of BT Scotland, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in June, and the first woman to hold the post. She is a former senior partner of the law firm McGrigors, where she specialised in intellectual property.

State of the broadband nation

BT Scotland is calling for action to increase use of broadband in Glasgow after a new report highlighted the city's low adoption rate.

Ofcom's Communications Market 2008: Nations and Regions report showed that 59 per cent of UK households in rural areas now have broadband compared to 57 per cent in urban areas.

In rural Scotland, 59 per cent of households have broadband, compared to 52 per cent of urban households. Across the country as a whole, 53 per cent of households have broadband – up 11 per cent in twelve months.

But while take-up in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Highlands & Islands was substantially ahead of the UK average of 57 per cent, in Glasgow penetration dropped to just 32 per cent.

Low ownership of PCs in the city was cited as a factor at just 44 per cent, compared to the Scottish average of 64 per cent.

BT Scotland's head of public affairs Ian Shanks said the findings highlighted a much wider issue.

"Broadband is an enabler of education and training and IT skills are fundamental for many roles in today's jobs market," he said.

"The low take-up levels in Glasgow suggest a much wider problem that has a direct knock-on effect on the Scottish economy and society. Digital exclusion leads directly to social exclusion and all the problems that brings.



Ian Shanks - Head of public affairs

"The fact that internet use appears so limited in our biggest city should be of serious concern to everyone who wants a wealthier, fairer and smarter Scotland."

BT Scotland plans to carry out further research in Glasgow and will update on findings in a subsequent newsletter.

Ofcom said that the rapid rollout of broadband services has meant that most parts of the UK now had access to broadband – and that its report marked the end of the so-called divide.

A separate report into broadband speeds commissioned by the BBC also attracted widespread media interest. It suggested speeds in rural parts of Scotland were generally slower than in urban areas.

BT responded, pointing out that the UK leads the world in terms of broadband availability and is a leader in the adoption of broadband.

While speeds may be higher in urban areas than rural ones, this is not evidence of a digital divide but simply reflects that people tend to live closer to exchanges in urban areas than in rural ones.

The speed of ADSL broadband available on any given line depends on a number of factors, including its distance from the local exchange.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Government had good news for the 3,800 households and businesses in Scotland identified as being out of reach of existing broadband networks.

It has awarded a contract worth up to £3.3 million to Avanti Caledonian Broadband Ltd to extend affordable broadband services using a mix of technologies, including satellite and wireless.

BT Scots saddle up for International Olympic Day

BT's Edinburgh employees have been pushing pedals instead of pens to raise money for Team GB athletes travelling to the Beijing Olympic Games this summer.

BT and Scots cycling star James McCallum challenged staff at the company's Edinburgh HQ to cycle one kilometre as fast as possible on three indoor super-bikes.

Colleagues in London, Cardiff and Belfast also took part in the challenge, with the Scottish cyclists delivering the top two times.

Brendan Dick, director of BT Scotland said: "The British Olympic Association Beijing Appeal needs to raise at least £3 million to enable more than 600 athletes and support staff to travel to Beijing and compete successfully at the 2008 Olympic Games.

"This was a great way to support the appeal in a fun and competitive way."

Pedal power: from left, Lee Hamill, BT's director of strategy for London 2012, Scots champion cyclist James McCallum and BT Scotland director Brendan Dick kick off the challenge.





Unfair trading still an issue in Scotland

Latest figures show that the misselling of communication services is still an issue in Scotland – and the level of cases has reduced less than in other parts of the UK.

The most severe form of misselling happens when consumers' lines are switched to a different telecoms firm without their knowledge or permission.

BT has campaigned on the issue for a number of years and has called on the whole industry to stop door-to-door selling to help reduce levels of unfair trading.

At its peak, 22,000 BT customers a month were informing BT they had been switched to another phone company against their wishes – a practice known as 'slamming' – or suffered other forms of misselling.

The numbers are still running at around 7,000 a month and some eight per cent of all reported cases are from Scotland.

Furthermore, there is a minimal decrease in volumes for Scotland in the last year, compared to other areas where reports have fallen by between 15 to 45 per cent.

Ian Shanks, BT's head of Scottish affairs, said: "While overall reports of unfair trading are down by around 40 per cent in the last year, 7000 cases a month is still far too many.

"BT has been campaigning since 2003 to protect its customers and is working with the regulator, Ofcom, and the industry to reduce all forms of unfair trading.

"But there are a number of ways in which customers can protect themselves. If a customer is contacted by another company over the phone, they should not give out their bank details to verify their identity or the fact they have been spoken to.

"If they only want information on products, services, or call costs, they should say so clearly. Telephone companies are legally required to give details of their service, without consumers having to order anything.

"If a customer has been a victim of misselling, a number of actions are open to them. Depending on the type of misselling, the customer's current supplier may be able to cancel the order, or the customer may have to contact the new supplier and ask them to cancel."

What is misselling?

- Your service is transferred without you being contacted
- You didn't give permission for your service to be changed
- You signed up for a different product or service
- You were misled about the company's identity
- You've been put under pressure
- You've been given misleading information
- You were asked to buy the service just to get information

More information is available on the [BT web site](#).

Smart City partnership wins Microsoft award

BT's strategic IT partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council has won an international award from Microsoft.

The partnership was the overall winner of the 'Citizen Service Infrastructure' category at the Microsoft Local and Regional Government Solutions Forum held in Portugal.

"It was superb to be recognised at such a prestigious international event," said Jackie Smith, lead consultant for BT.

The award recognised the transformation of the council's IT facilities, which aims to save millions of pounds.

IT-based savings delivered by the partnership to date have led to a council tax freeze and the £22 million savings projected over the next eight years will aim to release more funds for other projects.

Jackie and Andrew Unsworth, head of e-government at the council, highlighted the real benefits of the project for citizens during the event.

Jackie added: "Ever since the partnership began we have shared a passion to transform the way services are delivered to the council and the citizens of Edinburgh, and this award is a tremendous boost to us all."

The partnership has helped to develop the Council's efficiency through modernisation and development of email and intranet systems and has replaced the Council's ageing mainframe systems to guarantee effective working.

Scottish chief gets green light

BT Scotland director Brendan Dick has been named as the Prince of Wales' ambassador for corporate responsibility in Scotland, and has pledged to champion the environment during his year in the role.

Announcing the award, the Prince of Wales described Brendan as a highly-regarded member of the Scottish business community who was responsible for driving BT's devolved community programmes in Scotland, using technology to tackle social exclusion with a range of partners.

He described Brendan as a natural leader who always found time to motivate and inspire others, and cited his genuine commitment to partnership-working and collaboration. He had shown particular leadership in tackling climate change, added the Prince.

The ambassadorship was announced as part of the annual Scottish Business in the Community awards for excellence. Previous ambassadors have included Susan Rice, chief executive

of Lloyds TSB Scotland; Sir Robert Smith, chairman of Weir Group and Scottish & Southern Energy; and Sandy Crombie, chief executive of Standard Life.

Brendan, 48, said: "It's a privilege and an honour to be appointed to this role. Awards like this come about not just because of individual effort but, equally, the support of colleagues and other like-minded business people who share a passion for making a positive contribution."

He will focus on business sustainability during the year, with a programme of events around the theme *Building Business, Protecting the Planet*.

He added: "In a time of economic uncertainty it's more important than ever for businesses to be efficient and, contrary to some perceptions, that fits well with environmental objectives."

The annual Prince of Wales's Ambassador Award acknowledges the achievements of an outstanding individual who has shown leadership and personal commitment to responsible business practice.



Scotland's top childhood ditties revealed

A fund-raising poll of the nation's favourite rhymes discovered that traditional childhood songs are still treasured by the Scots.

Sponsored by Openreach, a BT business, the research revealed that "Oh Ye Cannae Shove Yer Granny off a Bus" was the overall number one choice of traditional local favourites, whilst "Ally Bally Bee" and the Scots version of "Wee Willie Winkie" earned second and third places respectively.

Children's communication charity I CAN created the online "Rhyme Stars" campaign which attracted more than 50,000 contributions from members of the UK public and more than 3,000 from Scotland.

For each rhyme voted for, Openreach contributed £1 to I CAN, which works to develop speech, language and communication skills for all children with a particular focus on children who find communication difficult.

The campaign was a fun way to highlight how important rhymes are for helping to develop children's speech, language and communication.

Openreach is BT Group's local network division, managing a Scottish network that carries 30 million telephone calls every day from three million customer lines.

How Scottish respondents voted

1. Oh Ye Cannae Shove Yer Granny Off A Bus
2. Ally Bally Bee
3. Wee Willie Winkie (In Scots)
4. Dance Tae Yer Daddy My Bonnie Laddie
5. Twa Craws
6. Three Craws Sat Upon a Wa'
7. Roon' Aboot, Roon' Aboot Catch A Wee Moose
8. Skinny Malinky Long Legs
9. Hey Jock Ma Cuddy
10. My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean

Public Sector team cracks summer challenge

A team from BT Public Sector Scotland is on track to raise £10,000 for leading children's charities.

Director Tom Kelly and colleagues formed one of six BT teams to represent the company in the 2008 Microsoft UK Challenge.

They joined 120 teams who battled it out in the beautiful surroundings of Stirling in a bid to raise £600,000 for Children 1st and the NSPCC.

The Public Sector team expects to hit its target of £10,000, and be among the event's top 10 fund-raisers, after four days and nights of gruelling action.

Mountain biking, canoeing, navigating by torchlight and running were all part of the challenge, as were puzzle-solving, code cracking and completing complex tasks.

Tom said the Public Sector team had two advantages: "We did some advance local training to familiarise ourselves with the terrain – and we're used to the midgets."

Scottish mums turn to internet first for childcare advice

The internet has taken over from family and friends as the number one source of advice on bringing up a baby for young Scottish mums, according to new research from BT and website Netmums.

Social changes, such as young people living further away from their own parents and the rise of 'virtual community' on the internet, mean that 41.7 per cent of Scottish mums now turn to the internet first for advice on health and parenting.

It means the internet has edged ahead of words of wisdom from kith and kin, with 41.4 per cent saying they'd ask their own mum or sister for tips first. A health visitor would be the first port of call for 10.8 per cent and 5.4 per cent would consult their GP first.

The BT research reveals a new picture of connected Britain, highlighting that mums are using the internet not only for information gathering and research, but also for friendship and support.

Lesley Gavin, BT Futurologist, said: "The dramatic growth of broadband in Scotland means modern mums can find the help and support they need online.

"Twenty years ago, mums had a limited number of options when it came to help and advice; being online now opens up so many opportunities.

"No matter where they are or what time they log on, the internet can help mums to seek advice and reliable information about a hundred different things at the click of a button. To me, the internet is all about empowerment and increased choice for modern mums."

BT is a founding supporter of Netmums and provides technological support to the site as part of its aim to bring communications benefits to everyone.

Case Study

Elgin-based Netmums user Jay Greengrass met her husband Jon thanks to an online climbing forum.

"I started climbing and began using the climbing website ukclimbing.com and Jon was already an established poster. We got to know each other's personalities online and clashed – we both enjoyed taking the rip out of each other! Then we met at a climbing event one of the regular posters organised, but didn't know who each other was. We got talking over a bottle of whisky and a campfire, liked each other and then it was "Oh My God!" when I realised who I was talking to! Now five years later we're happily married with two small children. If it wasn't for the internet we would never have met. There is no way we would have bumped into each other otherwise. I never thought I would end up married with kids, never mind to someone I met on the internet, but you just don't know the way things are going to turn out. I'm now blissfully happy as a mum!"

