



Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref MA-P-JJ-0263-16

Darren Millar AM  
Chair – Public Accounts Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

29 March 2016

Dear Darren,

Thank you for your further letter of 16 March regarding the Public Accounts Committee Report – Welsh Government Investment in Next Generation Broadband Infrastructure. You requested further information on a number of recommendations. I will address the points in the order that they were raised.

**Recommendation 1:** Superfast Cymru is a very large and complex project. The challenges faced by engineers and network planners should not be underestimated. For example, deploying a cabinet requires a number of steps as including: planning the local network, finding a suitable site, agreeing wayleaves, erecting the cabinet, supplying power to the cabinet, supplying fibre to the cabinet, lighting up the fibre and commissioning and testing. This is a two to three month process if the deployment goes according to plan. However there are a number of reasons that may delay the process ranging from blocked ducts and wayleave issues to encountering any number of other unforeseen issues that obstruct the deployment process such as Japanese knotweed, asbestos, newts and so forth. For delivery of fibre to the premises, the process is equally complex and on a huge scale, for example, having to deploy overhead fibre along the entire length of the Llanberis pass.

As I explained in my previous letter, the roll-out is dynamic with deployment to specific postcode areas, cabinets or premises moving forward and backward as required. For example, a delay encountered at one cabinet may mean that effort is transferred to another cabinet while the cause of the delay at the original cabinet is investigated and overcome. Cabinets are routinely prioritised and reprioritised in this way, with local completion timescales shifting forwards or backwards as a result. At a national level across the programme, the delivery schedule is unaffected by the dynamic nature of local delivery and remains on target to achieve the total premises identified under the contract. It is not possible to say with certainty how many, or which premises under the original roll-out may have been impacted positively or negatively as a result of the additional premises added. Therefore, I cannot provide assurance that some premises in the original roll-out will not be disadvantaged.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400  
Correspondence.Julie.James@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**Recommendation 2:** As outlined in my original response the new scheme will fund (or part-fund) the installation costs of new broadband connections for homes and businesses in Wales that deliver a step change in download speeds. Any residential or business premises that cannot currently obtain a 30Mbps service would be eligible for an ABC voucher. There are two levels of funding available depending on the needs of the consumer and the speed required, £400 where a consumer needs download speeds between 10 and 20 Mbps, and £800 for download speeds of 30Mbps and above. The difference between the vouchers is merely the speed that the consumer or business needs.

**Recommendation 8:** As explained above deployment to specific postcode areas, cabinets or premises can move forward and backward as required, for example, an issue with one cabinet may mean that another cabinet is brought forward while work is undertaken to address the issue with the original cabinet. Obviously, this may result in consumers and businesses getting a service sooner or later than anticipated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

**Julie James AC / AM**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg  
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology