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Sent: 13 August 2012 14:23
To: 'digitalhighlandsandislands@hient.co.uk'
Subject: response from The Sutherland Partnership

The Sutherland Partnership

supports any improvement in broadband speed which will support the wider economic benefits for businesses seeking to work more effectively from digital connectivity. The Tourist Industry is a key provider of commercial activity and employment opportunity in this county and there are already anecdotal reports of European visitors expecting a full and uncompromised internet service to be available during their stay, and being singularly disappointed by the current provision.

strongly believes that priority should be given to those areas which are currently most broadband deprived so that existing businesses in these areas can grow and attract new inward investment. We would like to see rural parts of Sutherland being amongst the first for superfast broadband to be rolled out. This would allow, amongst other things, the most challenging parts of the roll-out to be achieved at the first stage and allow the easier sections to be more readily put in place thereafter.

strongly urges that full consideration be given also to the social benefits which will accrue to sparsely populated rural areas in terms of ready access to tertiary level education, communication with family members working in exile in other parts of the UK or indeed throughout the world, and connection with the diaspora, from the clearances of past centuries, now spread across continents and anxious to relate to their family backgrounds.

notes that in the more rural and outlying areas of Sutherland, computer speeds are abysmal, and many of the lines are dated and have not been replaced. During large portions of the day, especially at peak times, speeds drop to near dial-up capacity. Such poor connection makes it difficult to conduct business under the conditions that urban areas can offer. Given the drive to encourage people to live, work and invest in Sutherland, it is important that adequate broadband speeds are available over the entire area.

The urgent provision of a standard, equitable and adequate information service is as crucial in the 21st century as the roll-out of electricity in the 20th.

Jim McGillivray
Chair

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Mura h-eil na beachdan a tha air an cur an cèill sa phost-d seo a' buntainn ri gnothachas Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd, 's ann leis an neach fhèin a chuir air falbh e a tha iad, is chan eil iad an-còmhnaidh a' riochdachadh beachdan na Comhairle, no buidhnean buntainneach, agus chan eil am post-d seo na phàirt de chunradh sam bith mura h-eil sin air innse.

10/10/2012
