

[Broadband](#)

**SYNOPSIS OF ACTIVITY IN THE ENGLISH REGIONS AND
DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS**

Report from 1 January to 30 June 2004

A lot of activity is taking place at a regional/devolved level contributing to the development of broadband in the UK, spearheaded at a Governmental level by the English RDA's and the devolved administrations. This annex is intended to act as a brief run-down of some of this activity, which includes projects funded under the DTI's £30 million UK Broadband Fund among others.

The Remote Area Broadband Inclusion Trial (RABBIT)

An example of joint working on broadband among RDA's and devolved administrations

The RABBIT project has been set up to promote the use of broadband to small businesses and organisations in remote areas and to evaluate the effectiveness of the available solutions. Several Regional Development Agencies and Devolved Administrations are working together to share RABBIT as a joint project, while a central team implements the trial.

The overall aim is to stimulate the market and increase competition as well as to provide a publicly available information source of the available suppliers and technologies, including price and performance. The project is aimed at small businesses in areas that cannot receive ADSL or cable modem solutions, but who are prepared to try out the alternatives now available. The project team have gathered information on a range of "ADSL equivalent" solutions from different suppliers (over 100 so far including resellers and wireless community projects) that meet the needs of differing sizes and types of business. The project is progressing well with 1673 applications approved nationwide so far.

The RABBIT project is supported by:

- South West of England Development Agency
- East Midlands Development Agency
- Advantage West Midlands
- South East England Development Agency ceased funding this programme at the start of the 04/05 financial year, as a result of the significant increases in broadband availability and advanced information about the Milton Keynes extended line length trial.
- East of England Development Agency
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Northern Ireland)

Discussions with a further 2 RDA's are underway.

The project is financed through funding from the DTI UK Broadband Fund.

South West

ICT strategy

The Regional ICT Strategy is a living document and is gaining an increased media profile as it continues to be taken forward with regional partners and interested parties across the South West. Many items of the Action Plan are far advanced and the ICT Strategy Driver Group will review it on 6th November. An ICT framework is being developed to support the six county partnerships (*see below*) and the intention is for the combined activities, partnership programmes and their aligned resources to be rolled up under a campaign identity of:



ACT NOW

An example of EU funding in an Objective One area

Actnow has won a National Champion award in the Broadband Britain Challenge, which seeks Britain's best examples of pioneering activities that can be achieved with broadband technology. Actnow has so far achieved 8,370 broadband connections in Cornwall, of which 2,345 are SMEs. 30 exchanges will be enabled compared to the original plan for 13. For more information go to <http://www.actnowcornwall.co.uk>

ActNow is an acronym for Access for Cornwall through Telecommunications to New Opportunities Worldwide and is a partnership involving the South West Regional Development Agency, Cornwall County Council, Cornwall Enterprise, Business Links, Cornwall College and BT who were appointed through an open tender to be part of the public sector led partnership offering the ADSL packages. Its ultimate aim is to provide a full package of broadband start-up services for 3,300 small and medium sized enterprises backed by a commitment from BT to a roll out scheme for the enabling of exchanges.

The Actnow package for SMEs includes pre and post sign-up advice, a range of computer equipment and broadband connection options to suit the needs of individual businesses, financial support and privileged members' access to the actnow website, <http://www.actnowcornwall.co.uk/>.

County partnerships

Following ActNow two new programmes, Broadband4Devon and Wiltshire & Swindon SmartPlace are also being implemented. SW RDA is working as a **regional catalyst** to develop each county partnership to form a framework across the region for continuing ICT development into e-business, e-government etc Each programme arises from a successful partnership of between 7 and 14 partners, including the SW RDA, which is now helping to mobilise similar partnerships in Gloucestershire, Somerset and Bournemouth,

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Dorset and Poole for whom we are seeking a common core proposal. We hope to submit a POP before Christmas 2003.

ICT framework

The consultants have now delivered the prescribed solution for a central framework for county partnerships developing ICT and broadband use across the region. SW RDA is keen to promote such a framework as a means of regional cohesion and to ensure ICT can help improve economic performance across the SW region.

Business Links

Business Links have key roles in each of the county partnerships but are also discussing a more formal, regional role in developing the use of ICT among SMEs. The possible common proposal from Gloucestershire, Somerset and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole could offer progress towards a regional approach, but there are other plans also being discussed.

ICT marketing communications plan

This appears to focus on the county partnerships but also broadly supports all regional ICT development across the region. The web site <http://www.connectingsw.net/> is being enlarged and revised to serve the purpose of the marketing communications plan, under the campaign identity pictured above. This will provide a coherent communication channel for the new county ICT development partnerships across the region, for which the SW RDA is developing a strategic ICT development framework.

Partner services

The catalogue of services for ICT development partners will consolidate existing items and introduce new ones. The list will be flexible and unused items will be deleted. It includes: *Regional ICT Strategy, Market targeting tool, Regional Framework, ICT Consultants Panel, Benchmarking Research, Case Study Catalogue, Infrastructure maps, Broadbandshow, RABBIT, Buckfastleigh methods/tool box, PR services, etc.*

DTI's Regional Aggregation Body (alias SPV)

The Broadband Taskforce (BTF) is asking the SW RDA to establish a Special Purpose Vehicle to aggregate public sector procurement in the south west. The plans are underway to have it prepared for launch in January 2004. Mr Don MacPherson has been appointed as the CEO and the top management team is now being recruited. The RABs will focus on supply-side solutions and must not be confused with the county/unitary partnerships which are running demand stimulation programmes. These will continue to develop the attractiveness for taking up and benefiting from broadband Internet applications.

Broadband Fund Projects

The Buckfastleigh Community Network - uses an SWGfL broadband connection to the local primary school for onward wireless connections to the health centre, town hall and library with further links by radio to other users. There is also a community access centre, "Wave", which delivers programmes

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exploring broadband use for Business, Education, Community and Health. The Duke of Kent visited the Buckfastleigh project on Monday 20th October with considerable media coverage. To gain some insight into how the Buckfastleigh project can be copied by any other community across the region/uk/Europe use this hyperlink to take you straight into a sample page of their new web site.

<http://www.broadband-buckfastleigh.org/downloads/documents-action-plan-bb6a.pdf>

The Broadband Interactive Content Demonstrator

The broadband show continues to demonstrate the benefits of broadband to SMEs to tourism, advanced engineering and aerospace sectors across the region. SWRDA has also arranged for SEEDA and other partners to use their interactive new media demonstrators including Business Links. The project is successfully over-achieving its brief by producing 19 demonstrators attracting over 733 registrations of interest to date. 12 demonstrators are already on the web site which can be seen through this hyperlink http://www.broadbandshow.org/tour_case_studies.asp

RABBIT

RABBIT is a trial including over 100 suppliers and the analysis of the broadband take up by SMEs will include case studies and a critical review of the technologies used, the support required and the types of business case justifying broadband. In respect of **cross boundary activity**, SW RDA continues to provide the banking service for the RABBIT project across all participating RDAs and DAs. SWRDA also hosted a meeting of RDAs in Bristol which agreed how to take the RABBIT program forward to 2004. A preliminary analysis of the trial to date shows where the best lessons lie and some full research of these is being formulated. The RABBIT project has successfully issued 657 offers for remote area broadband connections in the South West.

BroadbandOutreach

Corsham and Hartham Media Parks, and Trowbridge have all successfully launched Outreach Centres. Stephen Speed, the new DTI Director of Broadband recently visited Corsham Media Park; the visit was his first to the region in his new position. The outreach for broadband access being extended into the community from these sites is being tendered after approval of the Steering Committee. The first of these LANs will be live in October with the other 2 following shortly thereafter. £300,000 matched funding has been secured to date. The project has over achieved against its objectives taking the planned 5 centres up to eight.

Informative Action

The project is currently focusing on <http://www.connectingsw.net> The website now offers a database of 153 projects, 82 case studies, 101 reports with an easy search and navigation facility; it has over 460 registered users who receive regular news and events up dates.

ICT Benchmarking

SWRDA organised a workshop with sub-regional partners in January 2003 to gain consensus that a large-scale study is required; the SWRDA has received

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approval to commission research, with the support of sub-regional partners. The project has now been approved and will go out to tender in as soon as matched funding has been agreed by our partners. This has been slow in forthcoming.

E-mapping on www.ConnectingSW.net

A set of over 80 maps on <http://www.connectingsw.net> now show ADSL enabled exchanges and reach, fibre/cable provision, population and business density, and areas of deprivation. These maps will be updated in early October to reflect developments made over recent months.

SWRDA Wireless Conference

The Wireless Broadband Conference will take place on 11th November, near Bristol. Attracting SMEs, community champions, partners and public sector representatives, speakers include Nigel Heriz-Smith, Head of Rural Broadband Unit, DTI. More information is located on <http://www.connectingsw.net> or telephone 0117 950 9555.

SWRDA Regional ICT Projects Manager

Malcolm Garrington was appointed to this position with effect from 15th October. With a wealth of experience coming from the Actnow and Broadband4Devon projects Malcolm will be covering much more of the region from now on in this new role.

South East

Coastal Superhighway

A commercial demand analysis was undertaken in early 2003 to investigate the potential demand for broadband connectivity using fibre-optic networks linking the coastal towns of Kent and East Sussex with London and Brighton. The aims of the study included an investigation of the demand for high-capacity connectivity in the Region. A key priority was to investigate broadband usage that would not otherwise take place. The identification of public sector bodies that were likely to participate in piloting innovative uses of broadband and significant opportunities for collaboration by new network operators were explored.

SEEDA is tendering for a contractor to build the Coastal Superhighway in October 2003, of which the first phase is to be operational by Spring 2004.

The expected outcomes are to:

- Encourage regional investment by large corporates
- Attract operators to offer mass-market broadband solutions in the region
- Ensure the provision of more Points of Presence (POPs) in the network to encourage more companies to invest if traffic to the POPs is quicker and more convenient.

Having completed an Expressions Of Interest process via OJEC, SEEDA will be issuing a tender to a number of major carriers for the procurement of

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capacity on a new network to serve the coastal towns of East Sussex and Kent. The programme is expected to commence in the autumn and the first phase of the programme is expected to deliver capacity at the end of the year.

The tender process was conducted through the summer of 2003 and the results were not as expected. Of the carriers invited to tender, only two responses were received and these were both deemed non-compliant. The key issue was that the funds available did not provide sufficient coverage for the bandwidth procurement at the ten identified POPs and so no carrier was able to create a sufficiently robust business case. Therefore, the project did not go ahead. Consideration was given to creating a new project with reduced objectives, or channelling the funds into alternative activities, but this was rejected as implementation of process would not permit the project to go forward in reasonable timescales.

Satellite Programmes

SEEDA developed a Satellite Broadband Pilot in Hastings and Rother aimed at SMEs where current transport infrastructure and lack of broadband access undermined future prosperity in the area. The pilot studied the role of satellite broadband in regenerating remote communities and provided low cost access to broadband services in rural parts of the region where ADSL or cable modem services were not available. As a result of the success of this pilot, SEEDA extended it region-wide at the end of 2002.

Following a successful marketing campaign, led by the regional Business Links, SEEDA allocated 500 grants to enterprises in the region, which could not get broadband through DSL or cable modem. As a number of these grants were not subsequently taken up, SEEDA will be reallocating them in July, using our partner company, Wired Sussex, to administer the reallocation.

The satellite grant programme continued until the end of the 2003-2004 financial year, when it was finally closed, being viewed as a major success. A comprehensive report was created describing the impact of the scheme on the enterprises benefiting and debates are now underway to determine whether there is an opportunity to build on the contacts created by the scheme to promote more adventurous eBusiness activities.

Non-Broadband Fund Projects

SEEDA is creating a duct network in 2003, which will be owned by the public sector and available for use by private sector carriers to support fibre development in Hastings by the second half of 2003. The objective of this project is to reduce the cost of leased lines and promote access to competition by encouraging local loop unbundling (LLU) operators to enter the town.

Consultancy was undertaken on the target areas in Hastings and Bexhill and suggested a likely cost for the exercise. The decision was taken not to take this project to appraisal, as the cost exceeded available funds. However, the concept was viewed as sound, in keeping with the BSG's own Civil Infrastructure Model and also in step with the guidance offered by the

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European Commission on models for public sector intervention in stimulating the supply of competitive communications. Therefore, there remains an interest in taking the project forward and discussions continue at a local level to determine whether there is a more cost effective option available.

SEEDA allocated grants to every county and Unitary Authority in the Region to support rural broadband wireless pilots. SEEDA also offered them a consultancy to initiate demand aggregation programmes.

As a result of these grants, community wireless networks were created in a number of rural areas, which had no prospect at the time of getting conventional broadband services from BT. Networks were created in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Kent and the Isle of Wight, with another network in East Sussex in the early stages of implementation.

SEEDA ran a number of programmes (breakfast roadshows) with Institute of Directors and Business Links to encourage take-up by enterprises.

Over the course of the 2003-2004 financial year, around 100 such events were supported by SEEDA, mostly in the form of breakfast roadshows. The early events in particular were viewed as a great success and the macro-level evidence of take up in the south east indicates that it is one of many factors that has helped the south east to the most robust broadband take up outside of London.

SEEDA is producing online web content to provide support for community broadband organisations. This should be available by October.

This content became the "Self Help For Community Broadband Organisations" web pages on the SEEOOnline web site, launched by DTI Minister Stephen Timms at Ruralnet in October 2003. The reception for the website was one of universal approval and we were honoured to receive an award from the European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA), for excellence in online grant support, which was presented to a member of the development team at an awards ceremony in the Czech Republic.

SEEDA has initiated promotional activities aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of broadband in partnership with Business Links, IoD and Economic Partnerships. 20 have been held with a further 40 planned.

1. Availability

Availability in the region has progressed to the point where all but 14 of our exchanges will have broadband by the end of July 2005. The Milton Keynes extended line length trial will result in significant expansion of coverage throughout the area and so financial support for availability schemes is currently being held back until the true picture of broadband deprivation has been identified.

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2. Take Up

In partnership with the IOD, 6 promotion events will be held in the southeast during July, with BSG Executive Member, Bill Jones, appearing as a guest speaker at one.

The E-Technology Roadshow will see 6 events run in July, with up to 48 more from September. The aim of the Roadshow is to highlight the use of and benefits of technology, including broadband.

3. Usage

The results of the Teleworking Demand Survey conducted on behalf of SEEDA by Analysys will shortly be made public, following the completion of the Demand Survey process and a presentation to SEEDA managers. The aim of the programme is to identify the feasibility of siting purpose built Teleworking Centres in the south east of England.

No decision has been taken on whether to progress with the creation of teleworking centres, however further research is now underway with the support of Kingston University, to analyse the impact of "Healthy Working Centres".

On behalf of the DTI, SEEDA is hosting a workshop of all of the English RDAs and devolved administrations, to initiate a common approach to the support of content over broadband networks.

This initiative has been pursued through three workshops (Weybridge, Bristol, Cardiff) and the creation of an agreed paper, identifying strategic commitments that RDAs and devolved administrations should consider for the support of digital content.

Other

The RDAs created a single response to the Ofcom Strategic Telecoms Review, primed by SEEDA, but with significant contributions and approval from all RDAs.

As a result of close cooperation with English Partnerships, a leading edge ICT specification was created by consultants to English Partnerships for the Oakgrove development in Milton Keynes, which will lead to the deployment of Fibre To The Home, initially in Oakgrove, but potentially throughout the growth area of Milton Keynes. This has had a number of positive impacts already. Firstly, it has provided a degree of support and incentive to BT to deploy its own Fibre To The Home trials in three estates in Milton Keynes, in the immediate vicinity of Oakgrove (all on V10 Brickhill Street, one to the north of Oakgrove and two to the south). Secondly, it has provided a baseline for SEEDA developments in Hastings (Ore Millennium Community) and Ashford (growth area). Thirdly, it has provided the basis of a replicable model for other regions and opportunities for sharing best practice are now being identified.

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London

Broadband applications and IT infrastructure are a key factor in supporting London's and the rest of the UK's economic drive. Initiatives underway to support this include:

Thames Gateway Broadband Study- The LDA is working with the GLA, the Thames Gateway London Partnership and other key partners from the private and public sectors in completing a study into the likely future demand for broadband telecommunications in the Thames Gateway area, and options for meeting such demand. A study of the Thames Gateway Telecommunications has been compiled in partnership with BT Wholesale, the study presents two possible scenarios for the Gateway, one of which involves the build of a fibre optic network.

e-Start for Business - this initiative, a £1.8 million project commissioned by the LDA, seeks to assist small and medium-sized businesses, especially black and minority ethnic businesses and other minority businesses to harness the potential of broadband and transform themselves into e-Businesses. The project involves promotion, research, training and implementation support. e-Start began in January 2002 to run for three years, initially focusing on parts of London considered to be priority areas.

London Fashion Network - The London Fashion Network is a £370,000 initiative supported by £142,000 of LDA investment which will foster supply chain links between businesses in the London fashion industry. The project will run until 2003.

Fashion Capital - A complementary initiative is the Fashion Capital project, a £276,000 initiative supported by £189,000 of LDA investment, which will develop a portal for the London Fashion industry, providing a one-stop-shop to information sources relevant to the sector. The project began in March 2002 and the portal will be launched in 2003.

In addition to these existing initiatives, the LDA is working with its partners to:

- Promote the rollout of broadband infrastructure across London and to engage in pilot projects that demonstrate the potential of new technologies;
- Encourage the adoption of Broadband and other new technologies by SMEs;
- Promote the assimilation of ICT skills amongst London's workforce;
- Take a leading role in the electronic provision of London government services

The Five Areas of Focus in 2003/04

The e-business team will seek to achieve these two goals through strategic interventions in the London economy. Planned intervention for the 2003/04 planning cycle will be in five areas. These are explained in greater detail below. A more detailed project breakdown of the team's planned activities for

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2003/04 can be found in the *e-Business Team - Project breakdown 2003-04 document*.

i. Infrastructure

Working with key public and private sector partners and other stakeholders to ensure that London has the telecommunications infrastructure necessary to reinforce its position as a world leader in the application of ICT technologies.

This work will include selective assistance in the provision of broadband where major areas of business need or community exclusion are identified, and also working strategically with developers to ensure that new build or refurbished business premises are wired with sufficient bandwidth.

ii. Application

Working with key public and private sector partners to identify and implement technology solutions to the business problems and business opportunities faced by sectors of the London economy. Also to identify and implement technology solutions to the business problems and business opportunities of other groupings of London businesses.

Specific initiatives to be pursued during 2003/04 include investigative studies into the development of applications of new technology to the East End textile industry and the London tourism industry.

iii. Adoption

Driving the adoption of new technologies by small and medium-sized enterprises through awareness raising, education and support.

This work will be taken forward during 2003/04 under the banner of the e-Start for Business project – a £1.5m project which seeks to assist small and medium-sized businesses, especially black and ethnic minority businesses and other minority businesses, to harness the potential of new technologies.

iv. Content

Working with partners in generating the type of compelling content that will in itself draw businesses to adopt broadband and use of the Internet in general.

The LDA has a strong track record in the provision of such content – having launched the [http://www.london-innovation.org.uk website/](http://www.london-innovation.org.uk). The team will continue in the same vein and will, during 2003/04, begin work on the Childcare London website which seeks to provide a single pan-London website for parents and employers to find childcare in their area and an electronic means for childcare professionals to share information.

v. Promotion

Working with partners in the careful use of promotional tools such as events to promote technology and technology adoption. Such events seek to counter the perceived 'costliness' of the information needed by small business owners

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to inform technology investment decisions and to remedy their perceived poor understanding of the 'value' of such technology investment.¹

Planned initiatives in this area for 2003/05 include a two year regional sponsorship of the e-Commerce Awards (a national competition sponsored by the DTI and partners) and the proposed launch of a three-year Pan-London programme of e-Business Clubs in conjunction with the London Chamber of Commerce, Business Link for London and UK Online for Business. The first workshop has been scheduled for November 2003.

Supporting Activities

Whilst the team exists to take forward these strategic interventions, the need is also recognised for work within the agency to raise awareness of new technologies and to act as an expert resource for the steering of technology related projects.

In addition, the team will liaise with key partners such as the GLA Group, the London Boroughs, other Regional Development Agencies and Devolved Administrations and key central government departments such as UK Online for Business in supporting our joint agendas and where possible, exerting influence on policy formulation.

¹ Boston Consulting Group (2002), America's Inner Cities Wired to Compete: A Report on Inner City Broadband Readiness and E-Business Technology Adoption, Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, p10

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West Midlands

The DTI's UK Broadband fund allotted £2.08M for use in the West Midlands region. With a further £1.016M from AWM, a programme was initiated, and the spend profile was as follows:

£000's	02/03			03/04			Total		
	DTI	AWM	Total	DTI	AWM	Total	DTI	AWM	Total
IM/IC 3005/UKBF Rural Pilots	400	100	500		830	830	400	930	1,330
IM/IC 3006/UKBF Broadband Value Initiative	240	66	306	180	20	200	420	86	506
IM/IC 3007/UKBF Regional Backbone	500		500	420		420	920		920
IM/IC 3008/UKBF PM Resource	190		190	150		150	340		340
Totals	1,330	166	1496	750	850	1,600	2,080	1,016	3,096

The three main elements of the programme are described below. The fourth element funded a consultant to project manage the programme.

The Rural Broadband Pilots

The Analysys Consultancy managed this element. The six infrastructure pilots were all in the rural west of the region. These were at Leominster, Upton Magna, Bredon Hill, Lyvedale, Rotherwas and Eccleshall. The key reason for the pilots was to gain a clear understanding of the commercial issues surrounding rural infrastructure projects, as the technology is well proven.

The attached Analysys report on Commercial Lessons Learnt has a description of each pilot, and includes a discussion of business case, procurement and state aid issues. Due to potential sensitivities, the payments made to operators have been removed, but are available from AWM if required.

The Broadband Value Initiative

In June 2003, Advantage West Midlands launched the Broadband Value Initiative. This campaign promoted the benefits of broadband and encouraged businesses and consumers to register their interest in taking a broadband service with an Internet Service Provider (ISP). The launch was a major event held at the impressive Millennium Point venue in Birmingham and achieved considerable coverage in both the national and local media. It featured keynote addresses by Stephen Timms, DTI Minister, Pierre Danon, Executive Director BT Group, and John Edwards, AWM Chief Executive. The attendee list is in appendix A.

The BBVI was branded as 'The Power of Broadband' and this logo was extensively used for the launch, with a range of materials produced and used for the subsequent marketing campaigns.

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Two strands of activity were developed, a generic demand stimulation campaign aimed at generating demand, which would lead to commercial enablement, and a business benefit campaign delivered in conjunction with the Business links.

To support both a distinctively logo'd car (see picture) and other materials were developed. Responsive to the needs of the time the first operational activities were demand stimulation activities in support of the Broadband Rural Pilots in Bridgnorth and Leominster, campaign material included leaflets and CD ROMs. The enablement campaigns were subsequently targeted at clusters of communities and were centred on Shrewsbury, Lichfield, Cheadle, Telford and Tenbury Wells.

The Bridgnorth campaign proved so successful that the previously thought unattainable trigger level was achieved and the exchange was ADSL enabled without further intervention from AWM. An alternate site with equally bleak prospects for broadband availability was subsequently chosen for the pilot. These activities were directly responsible for the supply of broadband to over 40,000 consumers and 4,000 businesses at least 6 months sooner than had been forecast before the programme commenced.

Business broadband campaigns with Business Link

These used the Power of Broadband brand and have taken place in Redditch, Ross on Wye, Cheadle, Kenilworth, Newport, Willenhall and Wellesbourne, over 5000 SMEs were contacted and 200 received presentations and one to one advice.

The impact has been to increase the average business broadband take up in the communities visited from a regional average of under 20% to over 30% measured at the Wholesale level. A total of almost 400 businesses now have broadband as a result of the broadband campaigns.

As a result of the high profile of the events and the participation by local MPs, in addition to the people reached by the campaign directly a considerable additional impact was made by the media attention they received.

The Power of Broadband has proven effective during the exchange enablement campaigns, and is continuing as AWM's branding for the promotion of broadband infrastructure and demand stimulation in the region.

The West Midlands Regional Broadband Backbone

Over the last two years, the DTI has set out a programme to aggregate broadband demand in the public sector. This is known as the Broadband Aggregation Programme (BAP).

The West Midlands was ahead of this agenda and in some ways set out the "blueprint" for the national approach. In 2003, AWM was instrumental in setting up the West Midlands Broadband Company (WMBC). This is a company limited by guarantee. Represented on the Board are AWM, HEIs, FEIs, Local Authorities, DTI and a representative of the private sector.

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WMBC has a wholly owned subsidiary, the West Midlands Networking Company (WMNC). The Board of WMNC is Brian Woods-Scawen and Richard Hutchins.

WMBC has aggregated the demand and then physically connected the Midlands HEIs and the LEAs. In addition it is connecting the Further Education Institutions. To achieve this, the WMNC has entered into a service contract with Synetrix, a network supplier and operator, to provide the necessary data circuits to meet this demand.

The initial benefits of this approach are that aggregation creates economies of scale and therefore cost reductions for these institutions to enjoy.

In the longer term, it means all institutions in the education value chain have access to high bandwidth network capacity that has been the reserve of the Universities through SuperJANET (Joint Academic Network).

The vision is that all educational institutions in the region will be able to innovate in terms of education and research by having access to, and utilising very rich, interactive content specifically exploiting fast communication and processing speeds. In particular in the West Midlands, the FEIs are enjoying a level playing field with the HEIs in terms of bandwidth provision.

The DTI was influenced by this approach and in May 2003, a national approach to aggregation was set in motion. The RDAs were asked to form Regional Aggregation Boards (RABs) somewhat akin to WMBC to aggregate demand regionally. The RABs are co-ordinated by the National Aggregation Board (NAB). The DTI has provided grants for the formation and operation of the RABs.

AWM Funded Broadband Initiatives

Other major broadband initiatives supported by AWM include the following.

Remote Area Broadband Inclusion Trial (RABBIT)

Rabbit has become associated with the subsidised provision of satellite broadband to remotely sited (out of ADSL reach) businesses. However, it can award grants region-wide to projects that can provide remote broadband infrastructure via imaginative but robust and sustainable models. Last year it provided grants totalling £350,000, and an application in progress is hoped to secure funding through to 2008. Web Site: - <http://www.rabbit-broadband.org.uk/>

Switch on Shropshire

The project has been awarded European and Rural Regeneration Zone funding. These funds together with private sector contributions give the project a total value of £4.79 million. The project is based upon two key groups/ themes:

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Businesses

Switch On Shropshire will provide:

- Advice to business about the benefits of broadband
- FREE one to one business audit to get it right from the start
- Grants to get businesses broadband ready
- Sourcing broadband equipment-PCs, email servers
- Broadband connectivity both ADSL and wireless
- Developing business access to markets using e-commerce

Communities

The creation of 35 community access centres in existing community / voluntary facilities - Broadband Centres or 'Broadplaces'

These will provide:

- FREE web surfing for community and voluntary organisations
- Demonstrations on how to use the internet
- Drop-in use to access job, health and other information
- e-learning and e-training
- Establishing networking channels between interest groups
- <http://www.shropshireonline.gov.uk/>

Herefordshire in Touch

A programme of E-initiatives, including the broadband element 'We Want Broadband'.

Trigger levels will be set for various areas without broadband, and once these are reached, HiT will invite tenders from local telecom service providers to provide a broadband infrastructure. Web site: -

<https://www.wewantbroadband.org/>

Regional E-business Development Initiative (REDI)

This initiative is currently in the process of being re-structured, but key points are: -

- A total of £24M over four years
- Managed by the Business Links
- Will use a number of 'Strands' to encourage broadband take-up, and move businesses on their way up the 'E-business ladder'.

The Regional Broadband Picture

In the West Midlands, the percentage of households that have access to broadband has risen from 74% in August 2003 to over 91% in April 2004. In general within the West Midlands, all major urban areas are covered and most market towns and suburban areas have access.

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	April 2004
Regionally	91.5%
Herefordshire (assuming 95% of households in reach)	56%
Shropshire (assuming 96% of households in reach)	67%
Staffordshire (assuming 97% of households in reach)	88%
Warwickshire (assuming 95% of households in reach)	87%
Met Boroughs (assuming 98% households in reach)	97%
Worcestershire (assuming 97% households in reach)	85%

NB. Range limitations will prevent ADSL providing 100% coverage in rural areas

The West Midlands is currently the 4th most connected region behind London, the South East and the North West.

The Developing Position

In April 2004, BT announced that it had taken the decision to suspend its registration scheme and committed instead to enable all remaining 1,100 exchanges (with trigger levels set) by September 2005.

Shortly following this, they announced a trial to look at extending the range of ADSL. The results of this trial together with the systematic rollout programme recently announced will have the effect of raising access in the West Midlands to 95.5% by the end of 2004. This is below the agency's target of 97%, and we are working closely with BT and others to identify further measures to improve on this.

In addition, AWM is considering the merits of a region-wide rural broadband initiative. Funding availability and EU State Aid regulations present significant hurdles, but an EU Prior Indicative Notice has been issued, and an outline application is due for submission shortly.

East Midlands

EMDA want to establish broadband as the fourth utility and a key pre-requisite to all economic development and regeneration activity that is carried out in the East Midlands. The ultimate goal is to become an exemplar eRegion by 2010 and underpin the achievement of being a top 20 European region by 2010.

DTI Broadband Fund

Remote Area Broadband Inclusion Trial (RABBIT) looks to provide subsidy to SMEs to gain broadband access in areas that are "remote" from conventional broadband infrastructure. There are now 600 trialists to date in the region, all of whom are involved in ongoing evaluation of the alternative technology provided. Work is now underway to support providing subsidies to communities i.e. business and / or residential mix, as a result of demand from across the region for this kind of activity. Several community projects have emerged from this initiative, where 10 individual grants have been amalgamated to provide infrastructure to serve the entire community. One of the interesting learning points from this is that the organisers report an increase in community involvement and spirit, which cannot be said in examples where single grants have been used by single SMEs.

Other Projects

Lincolnshire Broadband Initiative has been developed by Lincolnshire Development, a department of Lincolnshire County Council. This £12.3m ERDF Objective 2 bid is divided into two distinct parts. The first is an infrastructure project seeking to deliver broadband to key employment sites and the second part is the ICT Action Plan, which promotes and facilitates use of the infrastructure to achieve clear economic development benefits. Combined the projects aim to drive economic growth and diversification. Public funds stimulate commercial services and increased ICT usage in businesses, whilst also building a critical mass of demand across public and private sectors. The project seeks to achieve 3,000 additional SMEs trading online via Broadband by the end of 2005. Significant lessons have been learnt from this initiative, with a similar project being designed for the SSPs that cover the remainder of the region. Each SSP has its own designated areas and conditions to fulfil, but are combining funding to leverage better economies of scale and value for money. This is an excellent example of how strategic partners can come together to work towards a common cause, to great effect. First deployment of Broadband infrastructure, under all of these projects is due to commence in October 2004. This is later than previously reported but is due to the need for EU notification and scrutiny prior to the commencement of procurement.

As well as taking some of the above forward, Robin Haynes, Alan Srbljanin, and Diane Simpson at EMDA are initiating work in three key areas this year:

SUPPLY – via the establishment of the RAB or ADIT East Midlands for public sector aggregation in the region.

DEMAND – via a targeted marketing campaign that seeks to accelerate the take up and availability of Broadband services in key strategic areas (geographic and sectoral) across the region. The consortium of BT, ntl and the RABBIT listed providers along with significant media stakeholders, strategic partners (both regional and sub-regional), Business Champions have all been working “in community partnership” to accelerate the take up of ICT Broadband across the East Midlands. The portal (www.emidlands.co.uk) has proven to be a great success with 25,000 visitors to the site, 5,000 of whom have migrated from the site to the ICT sector in the region to discuss purchasing broadband. Early indicators are that the rate of take up in the East Midlands has gone up by approximately 50% since May of 2004, thanks to this and other EMDA / SSP co-ordinated initiatives.

SUPPORT – via the “First Steps” model, pioneered in Scotland, to give practical assistance to SMEs to progress up the eCommerce ladder. The programme attracted 924 businesses in its first 8 months and is now being evaluated to take forward into 2005. This and the newly launched Regional eBusiness Club (7,000 prospective members from the existing county based clubs) is set to greatly influence the accelerated take up of Broadband services in the East Midlands.

This work is being carried out in close partnership within EMDA, with the Broadband Manager Group representatives in each SSP (set up by EMDA as

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strategic capacity in each area), the SSPs themselves and UK online For Business in the East Midlands.

Under the DTI Broadband fund EMDA established ICT Broadband managers in each SSP. Each manager has now embedded their strategies and action plans into the business plans of their organisation, and leveraged approximately £2m of devolved funding to support projects that deliver against agreed strategy. The group, led by EMDA, is now looking at making always on connectivity a mandatory consideration in regional planning guidance, leading the e-procurement agenda across the public and private sector; considering ways in which fibre to the door can be made into a reality and driving the agenda on adopting application services as the “killer applications” for all aspects of everyday life.

East of England

Research conducted by Analysys at the beginning of 2002 estimated that coverage of mass market broadband technologies in the region would be close to 100 per cent in urban and suburban centres by 2006, a significant proportion of rural areas will remain without coverage. This would have meant that as much as 20 per cent of the East of England population would still not have access to mass market broadband services in 2006, without intervention.

The situation today is much better than we dared hope when we began our activities. According to a report compiled for us by Mason Communications in April 2004:

“Broadband coverage across the East of England region has increased to a point where nearly 85% of the population has broadband availability from BT. With the growing number of local initiatives, particularly those with direct support from EEDA through the Connecting Communities Competition and Broadband Brokerage Service, this figure will near 98% by the end of 2005. However, this report has identified that quite significant rural areas of the region, with the more acute areas of Suffolk and Norfolk already highlighted, will cover the remaining 2% of the population.

The 16000 plus registrations of broadband interest gathered by EEDA since the launch of the Competition and Brokerage Service has demonstrated the interest and demand that can be generated with positive, supportive action. Indeed, the majority of these registrations followed a targeted media campaign in 2003, led by EEDA and Omobono. The focus of this campaign, and the subsequent promotion of the Brokerage Service, has clearly captured the attention of more rural communities in the region. From the EEDA sample, Mason predicts that some 11% (1,748) of registrants will not have a BT Broadband service before the end of 2005. However, 50% of this number (871) currently resides within an area that has received funding from the EEDA Competition, and should have alternative service availability in the coming months. Therefore, although BT claims that just 2% of the population of the EEDA region will be without BT Broadband by this time, our more rurally focused sample shows that this figure will be nearer 5%, identifying the remaining gap between urban and rural coverage.”

Advertising Campaign

The main aim of the campaign was to encourage people to the Campaign website where, as well as learning about Broadband, they could:

- Register their interest in getting broadband
- Find out how to set up a group to bid for funds from the Connecting Communities Competition run by EEDA

The campaign was run by Omobono, a Cambridge based PR company.

The Demand Broadband campaign used mailings being undertaken by other groups (from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors to the Institute of Management).

The results were very successful, as of March 2004:

- There were over 16,700 registrations on the site
- 87 communities entered the connecting communities competition

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- 21 communities (covering a population of 710,000) received funding

According to the figure on the website:

- 25.96% were responding to our radio advertising
- 20.11% heard via word of mouth
- 16.49% heard via a newsletter
- 8.28% saw an article in the press
- 8.15% saw our adverts on the back of rural buses
- 5.83% became aware of the site via email

The campaign won two national awards (the silver prize and a Special Award for the Best Use of Alternative Media) from the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising.

From being well down the list, the take up rate on broadband services in the region has risen to the third highest in the country – after London and the South East.

The Broadband Brokerage

The idea behind the brokerage was to encourage people to register their demand for broadband on our website, enabling us to see where clusters of demand occur that would justify the provision of a commercial service. This information would then be made available to potential suppliers.

Bearing in mind that those registering were those unable to get broadband and tended to live in rural areas, the results have been very encouraging:

- 49% of registrants now have broadband available
- 71% of registrants either have broadband available now, or are on an exchange that has exceeded the BT pre-registration threshold or are about to receive broadband using an existing service from another supplier
- 88% of registrants have broadband available now, or are in an exchange area that Masons forecast will be enabled by BT before the end of 2005
- 93% of registrants either have broadband available now, or are in an exchange area that Mason forecasts will be enabled by BT before the end of 2005, or are in areas covered by current EEDA funded projects and thus should receive broadband by the end of 2005

That means that 93% of the people and businesses registering on the website should have broadband by the end of 2005. Our challenge is to turn this into 100%.

The Connecting Communities Competition

The Connecting Communities Competition was undertaken with the aim of encouraging the delivery of broadband to areas which were subject to market

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failure. The prize for the winning communities was a substantial contribution to the provision of broadband services to that community.

These projects are currently being rolled out and most should be complete by the end of this summer.

The following community connections are partly or wholly operational:

Arrington

The Arrington exchange covers the parishes of Arrington, Croydon, Orwell, Shingay-cum-Wendy, Whaddon and Wimpole.

Cambourne

The Cambourne exchange covers the parish of Cambourne.

Cottenham

The Cottenham exchange covers the parishes of Cottenham and Rampton.

Crafts Hill

The Crafts Hill exchange covers the parishes of Bar Hill, Dry Drayton, Lolworth and Longstanton.

Hatfield Heath & The Rodings (Essex)

High Roding, High Easter, Aythorpe Roding and Sheering.

Swavesey

The Swavesey exchange covers the parishes of Fen Drayton, Over and Swavesey.

Steeple Morden

The Steeple Morden exchange covers the parishes of Abington Pigotts, Guilden Morden, Litlington, Odsey and Steeple Morden.

West Wrattling

The West Wrattling exchange covers the parishes of West Wrattling, Weston Colville, West Wickham, Carlton and Balsham numbers beginning 01223 29****.

Willingham

The Willingham exchange covers the parish of Willingham.

The remaining bids will be rolled out across the summer - with some delay on the Essex Countywide bids which will probably take it into the next financial year.

Support for UK Online for Business Advisors

In July 2003 EEDA agreed to fund fifty percent of the cost of the ICT Online Business Advisors across the East of England. The team comprises the specialist business advisors based in the six Business Link Operators and the Regional Champion based in the Small Business Service regional office in Histon.

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The table below shows the performance of the group against EEDA targets.

	EEDA Targets	Achieved
PA01 Number of jobs created	30	61
PA02 Number of jobs safeguarded	45	58
PB03 Number of new business start-ups	18	288
PB20 Number of new businesses attracted to the region	30	5
PB28 Number of cluster development initiatives supported	1	1
PC21 Number of people in in-work learning	45	2,447
PJ25 Websites developed / enhanced	180	519
PJ26 Report produced	2	3

It is clear that the jobs created and safeguarded targets were met and the number of new business start-ups assisted was much above target. This was primarily due to the emphasis that HM Government placed upon this category at the start of the year, when instructing the BLOs as to where they should focus their resources. It proved difficult to measure new businesses attracted to our region, but it is nevertheless believed that the existence of a strong ICT support mechanism has encouraged new investment.

Long Distance Radio Broadband Trial

EEDA funded Tendring District Council in a research project designed to evaluate low cost broadcast wireless broadband. The test network had the following characteristics:

- Based upon a wireless broadcast system developed specifically for deployment in the UK/Europe.
- Coverage - potentially 25 miles from broadcast site - radio mast near Great Bromley. Covers all of Tendring district.
- Provides broadband at 1.4Mb/s both way to all customers within area covered. Prices similar to ADSL/Cable - £20 to £30 per month

The technical trial was successful and will be turned into a commercial service for up to 4,000 users later in the summer.

Regional Broadband Summit

This EEDA event took place on 7th May 2004 at the Millennium Grandstand, Newmarket. It proved to be highly successful with attendees from the public sector, business, telecomms companies and industry experts. A consensus was reached that:

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- Driving up demand becomes much more important in the next phase. In particular, the region must work to ensure businesses have a better appreciation of the benefits of broadband. Clearly EEDA has a pivotal role in this and educating/supporting businesses in the exploitation of new technologies needs to be a core part of new business support arrangements going forward.
- There is a real need to establish/support a competitive market for the supply of broadband.
- We need to encourage the growth of high-bandwidth networks - this might take well take the form of the Norwich Ring Project.
- We need to bottom out the issues surrounding the use public sector investments in broadband - again the Norwich Ring Project may help us clarify state aid issues.
- In situations of complete market failure there remains a case for infrastructure investment which could take the form of funding cheap backhaul i.e. EEDA still needs to be active in getting as close to 100% availability as possible. We need to investigate whether we can leverage European funding.

Regional Economic Strategy

A goal relating to broadband and ICT is present in the draft Regional Economic Strategy (which is currently out for consultation):

Goal 8: Maximise the East of England's ability to take advantage of developments in ICT by ensuring that both high speed data connections and leading edge services are available throughout the region.

This translates into five priorities – each with a set of related activities:

Priority 1: Ensure that the capacity, coverage and speed of our data communications infrastructure keeps pace with the demands placed upon it by the growth in the number of customers, by their physical location and by the emergence of new services.

Priority 2: Promote the use of network based technologies among businesses, organisations and individuals in the region

Priority 3: Encourage companies in the East of England to act as suppliers and developers of services using network based technologies.

Priority 4: Encourage the development of digital content by companies, organisations and individuals across the region.

Priority 5: Undertake a lobbying, coordinating and educational function with larger companies, charities and all branches of the public sector to promote the adoption of new ways of working and new services

North West

Broadband Fund Pilot Projects

The North West Broadband Fund (NWBF) has supported the delivery of over 2,000 new broadband connections, with approximately 500 businesses participating in a variety of projects

22 projects were implemented, providing greater access to and take-up of broadband across the region.

Alston CyberMoor Project (Voluntary Action Cumbria)

The award winning Alston Cyber Moor project in rural Cumbria produced an astonishing broadband take-up rate of 32%, second only to Kensington & Chelsea, across Britain. The project also resulted in an additional £300,000 investment being provided into the local economy, thanks to broadband's positive impact on the community. House prices increased by 25%, creating an enormous impact on Gross Value Added (GVA) per head, and the social impact was also ground-breaking, with the community relishing the opportunities broadband provided.

The project provided fast wireless internet access to Alston Moor, a remote village in Cumbria. Over 330 FWA broadband connections were installed, with more than 270 maintaining the service post-subsidy. The projects main aim now is maintaining broadband take-up and ensuring longer-term sustainability.

Hawkshead Community Network (Hawkshead Traders)

Provided affordable broadband access to a popular rural tourist location in the Lake District through a self-financing broadband system. The system has the potential to be expanded to include the whole community and provide an infrastructure for e-commerce. 26 broadband installations have been implemented via a wireless network, connecting over 34 businesses. The project aims to increase business competitiveness in an area which previously suffered from the "digital divide" by utilising Ecommerce to increase business activity.

Broadband LAND Project (Cumbria Tourist Board)

The project is developing a mobile location-based information and navigation service aimed at the tourism industry and Cumbrian residents. A wireless broadband network will allow access to geographical, tourism and transport information. The prototype has been trialled by a User Group. A wireless network has been implemented, and a prototype has successfully accessed data from the Destination Management System via the server, utilising this.

Pirelli Lifelong Learning Project (Pirelli)

The NW Broadband Fund has supported the delivery of broadband connectivity, operating system and anti-virus software to Pirelli's onsite learning centre.

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The project has facilitated 359 employees undertaking basic skills assessment, a further 150 using surf direct, and 67 taking online courses. Additionally, 14 new union representatives have enrolled on TUC accredited courses and 6 learning representatives have achieved Learn Direct Level 1&2 Training.

One full time and three part –time projects workers have been employed via the project.

Eastserve Network (East Manchester Ltd)

Has provided broadband connectivity and access to Internet facilities, as well as training, for residents. Over 1350 Broadband connections have now been completed via Fixed Wireless Access. A Credit Union was used to provide support to low-income residents, and an effective portal was established to engage the community in a range of activities and in the provision of information and links to e-government. A high proportion of residents have undergone training in ICT which has increased their social inclusion and enabled greater employment opportunities.

Bolton and Bury Broadband for micro-businesses (Bury Metropolitan Borough)

Looked to identify the characteristics of Internet content of particular value to micro businesses (less than 10 employees), focusing on content that performs best with a broadband connection. The project has provided over 160 broadband connections. 31% of businesses reported increases in sales revenues, while 46% revealed that broadband had resulted in reduced operational costs. High numbers of businesses used broadband for e-procurement, and e-marketing activities, with e-banking being particularly prevalent.

Driving up Skills in Bury through Community E-learning (Bury Learning Partnership (Bury MBC))

Used broadband technology to respond to the needs of low skilled citizens in the East Bury and Radcliffe areas while stimulating demand for and use of broadband and promoting online learning. The project implemented broadband into 4 community venues, also provided a community portal and developed ICT skills. Between 125 and 150 people from the Bury and Radcliffe communities have participated in the project, with thirteen being awarded e-learning certificates by Bury CVS, 24 studying Learn Direct courses, and two students using the broadband facilities as part of their degree programmes.

Speke & Garston Broadband Pilot Project (South Liverpool Housing)

Seeks to provide broadband connections and multimedia content to a target of 150 homes and SMEs, employing a portal and set-top box approach. Broadband rollout is now commencing with project partners creating a range of digital content providing services and activities within the community.

Increasing business competitiveness by the effective use of broadband (Netshopper UK Ltd)

Aimed to assist 75 SMEs in Greater Merseyside to use online website products and services through the provision of broadband access and will act as a demonstrator of broadband benefits to SMEs. 12 Seminars were delivered to SME's outlining how broadband can enhance their business efficiency, e-trade, market their products and create productive websites for their businesses. Approximately 12 new broadband connections were implemented as a result of this project's activities, unfortunately the lead organisation had commercial difficulties which prevented it fulfilling the outputs successfully

Eden Faster (Digital Fells Ltd)

Piloted a technologically and commercially innovative solution to the problem of roll out of Broadband in rural areas where there was also the perception of lack of demand. The project provided around 30 broadband connections, in Appleby and surrounding villages, but the innovative nature of the project ultimately prevented a sustainable service being achieved within the North West Broadband Fund's lifetime.

Westlakes Broadband Network (Westlakes Property Services)

The project looked to assist the competitiveness of existing organisations and companies on site and offer enhanced facilities for inward investment as part of wider regeneration initiatives. The project was designed to provide added value by overcoming digital exclusion leading to customer choice and diversification. The provision of broadband connectivity to the science park was completed in September 2003, and by the end of March 2004, thirteen businesses, including over 80 users had received installations.

Point to MultiPoint 5ghz Fixed Radio Broadband (East Lancashire Partnership East Lancs.net)

A technology pilot, the project sought to address the major draw back of current FWA solutions; the reliance on line of site between transmitter and receiver, which creates major barriers to delivering the 'last-mile' to many locations. The purchase of monitoring tools and radio equipment were completed and development licence granted by the Radio Agency, quickly followed by installation of base stations and commencement of functionality testing.

Test results indicate that the 5.8ghz does have significant advantages over the 2.4ghz frequency.

The project failed to provide enough data to support further deployment of the technology, and greater analysis from the small number of trialists is needed before the service can realistically be provided to more end users.

Lets Go Global (Trafford MBC)

The project aimed to create an Internet TV Channel using Broadband Connectivity for Old Trafford, which represents the diverse communities of the

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area. These include a number of ethnic minority groups, women and girls, young people, local community groups and people with learning difficulties; - groups who are normally excluded from mainstream creative ICT activity and opportunities.

Four community venues received broadband connectivity, including one being housed as a media studio, complete with a 10Mbps service.

A range of ICT training took place as the community linked with professional digital artists and produced a range of community broadband content.

Cumbria Broadband Demonstrator Programme (Activ8 Business Solutions)

The project delivered 3 SME broadband demonstrator sites, with the third demonstrator being a group of SMEs based at a business centre.

AGUK are a land surveying business that needed broadband to enable fast transmission of survey maps to and from the U.S.A. and enable their clients easier access to other applications and data. In the four months since they were provided with a 1Mbps broadband connection (1Mbps download speed, 500Kbps upload speed) in February 2004, AGUK has already taken on one new surveyor to meet their increased business demands.

AGUK had employed 9 surveyors, but in addition to its new recruit it now predicts that it will employ 5 more new surveyors by 31st December 2004.

This means that the implementation of broadband could result in increased employment of 66% in less than a year.

Solo Sports (SS) are a distributor of racquet, footwear, and clothing who were finding it increasingly difficult to compete with larger, and more established competitors such as "Wilson" and "Head". Solo Sports have implemented a new distribution system and employees have embarked on an in-depth training programme to maximise its effectiveness. The businesses at Warwick Bridge Mill are benefiting from the provision of broadband, with Online Media predicting a 22% increase turnover, Bytebak 15%, and Jay by Jay 17%.

Increasing Marketing Effectiveness of SME's using Broadband (Multimedia Marketing.Com)

The project looked to stimulate the take up of Broadband by 200 SMEs who benefited from an online marketing programme designed as a business effectiveness.

204 businesses participated in the project, and a number of excellent case studies were developed, showing the effectiveness of this application as broadband content, assisting their business effectiveness.

Broadband E-Laboratory – Instant Search Ltd

A UK small business in the ICT sector worked with partners to deliver three innovative services to SMEs and support organisations. It provided demonstration facilities promoting broadband technology and applications, a diagnostics capability allowing SME's to try out their proposed solutions prior to installs, and an opportunity to test and develop new and innovative applications.

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50 SMEs took part in the elaboratory demonstrator sessions, and 37 of these took part in a telephone survey, which evaluated the benefits they derived. Four out of five visitors had not previously experienced broadband, however after participating in a demonstration session over 30% of businesses have taken-up broadband, with a further 20% awaiting a broadband installation. 60% of the SMEs report that productivity has increased by 15% due to their broadband installation.

Satellite Broadband at Gleaston Water Mill Tourist Attraction (s2f Gleaston Water Mill)

A satellite installation is providing evidence to small communities that broadband can be installed as a local community project using alternative delivery platforms. The project is developing as a model for very rural areas, with the opportunity to expand bandwidth based on demand, and includes the set-up of a not for profit broadband club.

Salterbeck Broadband Initiative - (Impact Housing)

The particular focus of this project was to bring the benefits of Broadband to disadvantaged people who in many cases resided in supported housing, and included homeless people, women fleeing domestic violence, and young people. The project team worked with the Learning and Skills Council to raise the basic skills levels of residents in the project and aimed to train local people for the community services job market. The Cyber-café oversubscribed at peak times, and some behavioural difficulties had to be overcome to encourage learning by young people rather than just email, chat and online gaming. Over 100 residents have used broadband at the two sites in total, and some residents who had never used computers before, are now using digital photography. The community's web email service had over 60 email accounts established, and 15 residents signed up to Learn Direct courses.

Youth & Communities ICT Broadband Learning Centre Initiative - (Lancashire County Council)

This project provided broadband into 15 community venues in communities throughout the county of Lancashire, which in many cases, overcame existing rural broadband exclusion. These ICT Broadband Learning Centres sought to develop the potential of broadband internet access to young people and communities as a whole. Joined up working approaches ensured the integration and added value of Learn Direct, FE Colleges, Libraries, and UFI provision, and the County Council Youth & Community Service UK Online to the project. Several hundred young people participated in the project, using web cams to communicate between the different venues, creating digital content, and learning a range of ICT skills.

Developing Community Access to Broadband in East Cheshire - older people and the voluntary sector – (Age Concern East Cheshire)

The objective was to pilot innovative and creative approaches to promote

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development and use of Broadband by older people and across the voluntary sector. The project increased the number of older people accessing Broadband services and promoted equal opportunities and social inclusion by challenging digital exclusion.

Over 240 “silversurfers” took part in the project., learning new ICT skills such as email, digital imaging, and research.

Malpas Mesh – Try Before you Buy - (Cheshire County Council)

This project enabled SME’s to exploit the features and promote the benefits of broadband to other SME’s in similar rural locations. It trialled MESH radio technology and aimed to confirm its viability in a rural environment as well as determining the feasibility of aggregating bandwidth for public sector and business internet use. In addition it looked to identify commercially realistic levels of installation and ongoing charges for broadband connectivity via mesh radio in relation to business.

11 businesses were engaged in the project, and reported time and cost savings, improved communications, development of web sites and improved customer service.

The pilot is continuing as implementation issues delayed on the start of the project which means that commercially realistic tariffs have yet to be identified to roll out the service to a greater number of users.

Solway Rural Broadband – (Solway Rural Initiative)

This project was a trial of satellite broadband distributed over an innovative managed fast wireless ethernet backbone system targeted primarily at local businesses.

The aim was to establish an expandable, high quality, reliable, cost effective, upgradeable and sustainable broadband service to 5 x “digital excluded” areas of North Allerdale, Cumbria. The broadband distribution would benefit through the implementation of shared bandwidth (5 x 2MB) by aggregated demand software. This enabled the bandwidth to be spread across the 5 domains to wherever demand was greatest to provide a highly available, cost effective and flexible service.

The project provided broadband connectivity to 22 end users as part of the initial trial, and further to this success, rollout of the service has commenced towards achieving their sustainability target.

Project Access

Concurrent to, and in support of the NW Broadband Fund activities in Cumbria, is **Project Access**, administrated (and funded) by the NWDA and delivered under the auspices of the **Cumbria ICT Broadband Initiative (CIBI)**,

The project seeks to address the imbalance in Cumbria caused by the lack of affordable access to advanced communication networks, and the resultant failure to reap the benefits offered by high speed, high bandwidth digital services.

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A contract for the provision of Broadband services will be let by the NWDA, which will facilitate the delivery of access to **Broadband to over 90% of the resident citizen and business communities throughout Cumbria.**

The solution to the delivery of this service will be provided over a single technology, or by combining a series of technologies integrated into one final service package. As such, the requirement is truly “Technology Neutral”.

The MINIMUM service provision delivered by Project ACCESS will be as follows:

- Citizens - mainstream and disadvantaged citizens alike will be afforded the opportunity to access broadband services at a minimum of 512kb/sec asymmetrical
- Businesses – will have the opportunity to receive a minimum 2000kb/sec asymmetrical service
- Public Sector – the facilitation of a managed e-government service connecting over 800 public buildings as per their individual bandwidth requirements which have already been identified

The service delivered by Project ACCESS will not disadvantage any citizen or business within Cumbria with regard to price, regardless of which Internet service provider delivers the service. The consumer will be able to rely upon a guarantee that the service cost will be no more expensive in Cumbria than it is in established “wired up” cities (e.g. Central London, Central Manchester etc.) external to the sub-region of Cumbria.

This project is currently pending HMT approval

Yorkshire and Humberside

Business Insight - this programme funded through the UK Broadband Fund consists of two related projects: ***Proof of Concept*** and ***Satellite Broadband***. The Proof of Concept project has facilitated the central Business Insight hub where local participants can log-on and learn about the benefits broadband can bring. Business Insight members can access ECDL content, participate in forum debates, search White Papers and other information and research, read case studies, and contact other Business Insight members.

The Satellite Broadband project provisions 450 SMEs (200 of which are rural) with a satellite broadband connection, free for one year, with the option for the participant to commercially renew after the free period. This project is still in delivery until the end of the year. 450 SMEs have been successfully connected to the Satellite Broadband service.

An SME Evaluation sub-project has been established, whereby SMEs can feedback their business might require from broadband business services. The information received will be fed back into the programme and be available for use on other projects created for e-business services, giving them tangible and legitimate direction.

Work is now underway to mainstream this project within other activities being supported through the RDA with Club UK Online taking the lead for managing content and providing broadband reliant service demonstrators on stream supplied by validated local ICT suppliers.

York Broadband Project -as at August 2001 BT had ADSL-enabled 2 exchanges in the City of York; York and Melrosegate. However, despite assurances from local partners that there was demand in the city take-up was very low. It was agreed that Yorkshire Forward in partnership with Science City York would identify the problems and look at how local businesses and residents could be encouraged to take up the service. With the offer of a 75% subsidy, 50 businesses were connected to broadband. The programme commenced in April 2002 and will be completed in mid 2003.

A pilot programme was undertaken to address the issues identified. This was branded Broadband York and incorporated PR, advertising, Direct Mail, online activity, workshops and events. The launch event in May 2002 was followed by a mail campaign resulting in a Broadband York week in September 2002.

As a result of the activity the penetration of broadband in York has significantly out-performed the other major cities in the Yorkshire and Humber region and the UK as a whole. In addition, BT has enabled the remaining four exchanges in the city – this was achieved prior to the trigger level programme being implemented.

Broadband Supply and Demand Mapping – a map of supply and demand has been charted in the region, giving a clear picture of where broadband connections are and what the potential market for it could be in any area. This

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is to be used as a guide in future broadband projects so new initiatives can be carefully targeted.

North Yorkshire County Council Wireless WAN - NYCC has proposed a proactive solution with the creation of a sub-regional Broadband network that will service both public and private sector needs. This network will be built and managed by a private sector telecommunications company (MLL) and currently supports the NYCC's own WAN and is beginning to roll out to other public sector bodies including the District Councils and local schools. Yorkshire Forward is looking to support the roll out of the network to the private sector through a combination of e-Business support and incentives to drive early take up.

NorthLincsNet – North Lincolnshire Council are leading this Yorkshire Forward supported project, which is linked to creating Broadband demand through the development of a portal incorporating all the public sector partners and many private sector organisations in the county. The Portal goes live shortly. DTI Broadband funding will be used to support the project through the connection of a number of Business Parks to broadband in this very rural area.

Broadband Yorkshire and Humber – This project is a combination of information, aggregation and incentivisation. At the hub of the project will be a central website providing easy to understand information about the different broadband technologies their benefits, costs and availability. It will also provide resources for community groups to aggregate their own local demand to enable alternate technology solutions to be explored in addition to ADSL.

In addition the project is running 4 pilots, combining incentives of up to £300 to 450 SMEs in each pilot in specific locations backed up by e-Business support supplied by the local Business Link. This project is technology and service provider neutral and is being used to leverage investment in broadband by the private sector. As a result of the project the following 18 exchanges are being enabled for broadband.

Humber: Barton upon Humber, Cleethorpes and Grimsby

North Yorkshire: Bedale, Catterick, Catterick Camp, Great Ayton and Pickering

South Yorkshire: Askern, Bentley, Rawmarsh, Thrybergh and Thorne

West Yorkshire: Addingham, Burley-in-Wharfedale, Cullingworth, Steeton and Thornton.

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North East

Broadband-related projects underway in the North East region include:

Regional Portal – <http://www.n-e-life.com/> an electronic place where every individual, business, organisation and institution can trade, develop and interact. It is a broadband demand generator and has introduced over 7000 businesses to broadband; put 70 000 business online with a mini-website; added over £100 million to regional turnover via the <http://www.n-e-opportunities/> site; given comparative statistics and national comparators on a range of indicators for the region via <http://www.n-e-region.com/> and <http://www.n-e-knowledge.com/>; introduced a disability site, <http://www.n-e-ability.co.uk/>, and a basic learning site soon to be linked to Ufi at <http://www.n-e-learn.co.uk/>

Market Towns ICT Initiative - this has introduced over 4,700 rural businesses to broadband via 11 Market Town Portals, over 100 of which are now operating e-commerce solutions via broadband. An example is Sweets for Treats, a rural post office in Barnard Castle now selling old English sweets to the United States, Israel and the Far East.

CORUS Task Force - £500,000 given to the Task Force has so far delivered additional broadband infrastructure to the Wilton Centre and paid for the development of the broadband strategy for Tees Valley

Broadband Awareness campaign - UK Broadband Fund money has been used in this campaign, which has seen reduced trigger levels on 22 BT exchanges, the enabling of 6 exchanges, the creation of 21 virtual business clusters, the introduction of Broadband via satellite to Wear valley

Consett Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme - this scheme has introduced broadband to over 120 homes in a unique partnership between Education, Social Services and the Local Council to introduce learning via broadband to deprived inner urban areas.

Grow Your Business – a £5 million project to deliver broadband and e-commerce to rural and urban SMEs. Over 100 businesses have signed up to participate in this programme in its first week of operation

Satellite Broadband - This broadband awareness campaign has delivered two way Broadband over satellite to over 186 businesses on 37 sites. It has been an extremely cost effective and successful campaign demonstrating the appropriateness of two-way satellite communication to rural areas. This is to be extended – see below.

Vibes – an RDA supported SME initiative in Tyne and Wear bringing broadband to a variety of small business clusters.

DurhamNet –an RDA supported initiative bringing broadband to most of South West Durham and Weardale, specifically to over 250 rural businesses.

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South East Northumberland – a project designed to bring blanket broadband coverage to SE Northumberland using wireless technology and facilitated by RDA funds.

Network Integration – a project designed to link 11 market towns' existing networks and introduce a number of kiosks to rural areas.

Broadband Estates – a project to use 24 of Regional Development Agency's Estates as a locus for broadband delivery in areas peripheral to BT ADSL

Version 2.0 of 'Towards an eRegion' is available on the One NorthEast, Regional Development Agency's website (<http://www.onenortheast.co.uk/>) and Version 3.0, including the sub-regional partner plans, will be available shortly.

Wales

Broadband Wales Action Plan

www.cymruarlein.wales.gov.uk/broadband.htm

The multi-million pound Broadband Wales programme was launched by the Welsh Assembly Government in July 2002. The plan is split into five areas comprising demand stimulation, supply stimulation, encouragement of local initiatives, specific procurements, and the aggregation of public sector demand.

Examples of some of the many projects both currently underway and planned for the future under these headings are:

Demand Stimulation

- The SME Broadband Support Scheme became operational in April 2004 and has already convinced 76 businesses across all areas of Wales to adopt broadband by utilising a range of different technology options, including xDSL, Cable and satellite. Increased financial aid of up to £3000 is available and the scheme has been extended to incorporate the voluntary and charity sectors. This initiative is building upon the earlier success of the SME Satellite Support Scheme that assisted 251 businesses in Wales with the cost of connecting to broadband.
- Broadband has been installed in all of Wales' main Business ICT Support Centres. This provides businesses in each Unitary Authority in Wales with hands on experience of using broadband.
- The Assembly Government is encouraging broadband content under the National Grid for Learning Cymru, a project that uses digital technology to provide curriculum materials for use in schools across Wales.
- A focussed marketing and awareness campaign was instigated in May 2004. This is designed to stimulate knowledge and take up of broadband communications in residential and business communities where broadband is available. Furthermore, increased awareness will convince suppliers of the commercial viability of providing their service in Wales.
- In April 2004 the contract for the Broadband Wales Observatory was awarded to the Cardiff University based eCommerce Innovation Centre, (ECIC). The observatory will conduct research on broadband activities operating in the UK, Europe and beyond. The observatory will then be able to provide advice on the Broadband Wales Programme.

Increasing Supply

Opportunity Wales continues to support the development of broadband and ecommerce in general to small and medium-sized businesses in the Objective 1 areas of Wales. Opportunity Wales advisers are regularly present at the WDA's WIS trailer. The trailer travels throughout Wales hosting numerous

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plain language demonstrations, have-a-go workshops and local case studies, offering practical help and advice. Invited businesses can join Opportunity Wales for breakfast to find out how with broadband and eCommerce businesses can see the benefits of using this technology. This event is being taken forward in conjunction with BT and the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), with representatives from each giving short presentations that highlight the benefits of using broadband and eCommerce.

The WDA led Fibre Speed to Business Parks/Locations will seek to initially serve around 30-40 business parks throughout Wales. The project is specifically seeking to address the issue of affordability for such advanced broadband services ensuring that it is available to the WDA's strategic locations at a price comparable with London and the South East of England. The formal feasibility and evaluation work will within three months deliver a "Costed options" strategy document, including financing options that will enable the project to move forward.

Encouragement of local projects

The Broadband Wales Taskforce has been recruited and are already facilitating successful partnerships/initiatives across Wales, focusing heavily on supporting broadband activities/projects at local level. The taskforce are dedicated to looking at broadband supply and demand in Wales. They put interested parties in touch with other broadband projects or suppliers that are present throughout each of the economic areas of Wales.

The Regional Innovative Broadband Support project (RIBS) has received approval from the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and will support innovative projects in Objective 1 areas of Wales. RIBS is a £13.4 million project designed to deliver affordable broadband technology to communities, citizens and SMEs by offering match-funding to innovative, local and regional projects for recipients in the Objective 1 areas that would not otherwise have access to a high speed communications network. The Taskforce will be present to assist potential projects with their applications. The project will be launched later this summer.

Aggregation of Demand

Broadband Wales will drive forward the aggregation programme in the public sector and where appropriate in the private sector. In the public sector, it will build on the work already undertaken in Life Long Learning (see below) and health to offer facilities and the benefits of aggregation to all public sector organisations operating within Wales.

The lifelong learning network is a multi million pound project initiated by the Welsh Assembly Government in October 2001 to provide broadband connectivity and multi media equipment to schools, learning centres and libraries in Wales. In March 2002 the Assembly Government signed a contract with Logical UK Ltd for the provision of a countrywide broadband network linking all 22 Local Education Authorities in Wales and eight University sites. This core network was in place in August 2002 and connected to the Internet via the Joint Academic Network (JANET). To date 99% of secondary schools,

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86% of primary schools, 92% of libraries and 92% of ICT centres across Wales are connected at the specified benchmark level.

In addition, NHS Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government have made a £20 million investment that will provide broadband connectivity to all hospitals in Wales, linking 550 hospitals, GP's and home workers with high-speed broadband connectivity. All Welsh hospitals and GP surgeries now have access to broadband services and NHS Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government are working on identifying how broadband can be used to benefit patient well being.

A report is due to be published in the autumn on how the Welsh Assembly Government plans to take forward and reform public services in Wales. This initiative could lead to demands for significantly different networks and solutions for interworking in the public sector.

Strategic Programme Review

Since the launch of the Broadband Wales Programme in July 2002, the availability of mass market broadband both in Wales and the UK has increased significantly. With this in mind a Strategic Review of the Broadband Wales Programme has been commissioned and is being undertaken. This will be completed later this summer and a new broadband strategy and targets will be announced by the autumn to reflect current and planned market conditions.

Scotland

The main aim of the Scottish Executive's broadband strategy is to promote affordable pervasive access to broadband connections across Scotland. Around 82% of Scotland's population currently has access to broadband via ADSL and/or cable modem and the take-up of these services is still low.

In the light of these circumstances, and the depressed telecoms market, the latest update to the www.scotland.gov.uk/connectingscotland/makingithappen strategy, published last December, included a major new £24 million initiative to widen access to affordable broadband services and improve uptake.

Major demand-stimulation measures have already been implemented under this fund. These included a Scotland-wide business broadband incentive offsetting the costs to business when they take on a broadband connection. In addition, we pursued a major, award-winning, technology-neutral marketing campaign in partnership to promote uptake of broadband.

More recently, the Scottish executive has just announced an intervention aimed at bringing broadband to every community in Scotland by the end of 2005. An open (supplier and technology neutral) invitation will shortly be issued to suppliers to tender for the work required to achieve this.

The continued commitment from the Scottish Executive to higher bandwidth services was expressed in the Partnership Agreement, published on 15 May, which proposes policies for the Scottish Executive for the next 4-year term of the Scottish Parliament:

"We are committed to extending broadband connectivity for every area of Scotland to ensure Scotland's competitiveness, both internally and internationally, in both public and private sectors."

Pathfinders

The Scottish Executive is also running two pilot projects (the Pathfinder Projects) in the Highlands and Islands and the South of Scotland to aggregate public sector demand for broadband infrastructure.

Telecoms Trading Exchange

Scottish Enterprise's Telecoms Trading Exchange project (TTE) is a virtual marketplace for wholesale broadband connectivity. It opened in January 2003 and is now providing Scottish businesses with high capacity bandwidth at competitive rates. The TTE is essentially a website where worldwide telecoms companies can post their prices for services available in Scotland. The exchange is located in Edinburgh at Scotland's major commercial co-location facility, Scolocate, and is open to any telecoms company and Internet Service Provider (ISP).

ATLAS

Scottish Enterprise's project ATLAS aims to improve the competitiveness of the telecoms wholesale market for the benefit of high-end users in selected business parks across Scotland.

Scottish Programme under UK Broadband Fund

All of the projects indicated below are currently being evaluated and full reports will follow shortly.

1. Awareness-Raising/Demand Stimulation projects

- **Neutral Broadband Website** - providing online independent advice and information on broadband for businesses. High interest has been recorded in both the suppliers pages and also the broadband case studies on the site. The site has become a natural hub and focal point for all of Scottish Enterprise's (SE) broadband activities and is integral to the promotion and administration of SE's Business Broadband Incentive Scheme.
- **Network of E-Business Demonstration Centres (EDCs)** - providing accessible hands-on experience of simple broadband applications together with independent expert advice for SMEs to make educated decisions on using broadband. 11 are currently operating and delivering a workshop specifically designed to meet the needs of SMEs who are on the Broadband learning curve.

2. Supply-related projects

Connected Communities Wireless pilot - this project will provide a pilot broadband network capable of supporting a community spread across a number of populated islands in the Western Isles using a range of technologies, primarily wireless.

It will be providing scalable broadband services to those outside the reach of commercial supply later this year.

Powerline Carrier Technology (PLT) Pilot Projects – Two technology pilots in Crieff and Campbeltown illustrated the potential for PLT technology to deliver broadband to users in rural communities via the electricity socket. Crieff has yielded 3 diverse PLT case studies featured on the Neutral Broadband website. SSE also established a commercial pilot in Stonehaven based on lessons and success of the technology pilots.

Community Broadband Project - is a pilot technology trial that provided broadband connectivity to a number of participating Third Sector organisations such as voluntary groups and not for profit organisations in the Girvan and Ardrossan areas of Ayrshire. The pilot project linked 11 voluntary organisations and over 70 users to the internet each day. High speed Internet access will deliver huge benefits for the organisations in their work, which

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address disability, promote rural transport initiatives and youth development as part of their remit.

This project was very successful in raising awareness of and demand for broadband in this area. The funding for the project ceased on 31 March 2004, however the local social inclusion partnership has expressed an interest in taking over the management of the network. This has facilitated collaboration between various enterprises in the area, which prior to availability of broadband may not have been possible. The project also identified the scalability and replicability of wireless solutions. In addition, as with the other wireless projects, this clearly identified the need to consider careful mast siting to facilitate access and help ensure continuous service, and also the need to consider prevailing climatic conditions when rolling out such networks.

Broadband Farming Project – used wireless technology to deliver specialist rural content and applications to farming and rural based businesses in South Ayrshire. The project measured the impact that broadband has on the profitability of these businesses and test whether a commercial case can be constructed for rural area access to broadband by these means.

The pilot began in August 2003 and has 14 businesses in dairy farming and the agricultural supply chain sector based in the Maybole, Kirkmichael and Crosshill areas, taking part. It is believed that the project helped raise awareness and stimulate demand for broadband access from local SME's, residents and community groups in the area, by demonstrating the benefits experienced by the pilot users.

The project's key outcome was in raising awareness of and increasing demand for broadband amongst the farming community. The project also highlighted the need to be careful in considering the size of the area which should be covered by the network. Too grand a scale can create a range of serviceability issues and may make other technologies more cost effective to introduce for service provision.

Scottish Borders Rural Area Network

Is a pilot project designed to trial innovative approaches to the delivery of broadband services in underserved areas. The Scottish Borders area was chosen as the location of this pilot, as it had the lowest availability of broadband in Scotland. Fixed wireless technology is being used to deliver the broadband service. SBRB services are available to both business and residential customers. The Communities targeted to receive this service are Cardrona, Duns, Earlston, Eyemouth, Innerleithen, Jedburgh, Kelso, Newtown St. Boswells and Coldstream.

3. Content/Applications-related

The Wireless Excellence Network (WEN) has been established to promote Scotland as a global leader in wireless. The objectives are to raise awareness and educate, promote research & development, trial future technologies and bring together Scottish expertise from manufacturing, software development, telecoms and academia.

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The WEN currently includes the following trials and demonstrations:

Wireless Incubator at Hillington Park Innovation Centre

SME's can develop, test, and demonstrate wireless applications over a variety of wireless environments at the Centre, which has been equipped with the necessary hardware, technical support, and contingency systems. As a result, some exciting and innovative applications have emerged.

This project has been a great success and has clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of combining the right infrastructure with the right business support facilities in generating innovative applications from SMEs. The centre is now regarded as a centre of excellence in the development of wireless applications and has become the focal point for seminars on these developments for the wireless sector in Scotland.

Wireless Technology Comparison at EICC

Scottish Enterprise have worked in partnership with NTT, Japan's leading telecoms supplier, the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) and British Telecom to bring the most advanced wireless technology to Scotland at the EICC. A wireless hotspot has been created where visitors can access the Internet, without the need for any physical connections, at broadband speeds and experience the difference in data transfer and connection speeds between three wireless technologies. NTT have provided 2 future technologies for this comparison.

The project clearly demonstrated the advances which have been made in the wireless technologies through comparison of existing technologies with the advances which have been made by NTT. It was considered that without the intervention of Scottish enterprise, that the opportunity to demonstrate this technology in Scotland, (which was the first time it had been demonstrated anywhere in the world outside Japan), would not have arisen. The conference centre installed its own wireless network as a consequence of this demonstration and continues to market this service to events organisers. The project was considered a great success and helped raised awareness of the benefits of wireless technologies for businesses.

Other Scottish initiatives

Community wireless – Scottish Enterprise

Two trials are undertaken in the SE area in Aberfoyle and Lochwinnoch (as part of the WEN project) where communities have been very innovative and proactive in getting aggregated community broadband demand projects underway. Apart from getting users connected to broadband key learning has been gained in how to take an idea and make it work overcoming the logistical, technical, organisational and legal challenges that were posed. A key outcome will be the articulation of this learning in the form of a best

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practice manual for other aspiring communities to follow as there is an increasing demand for this type of model in areas unlikely to ever get broadband via traditional terrestrial means.

In both cases the projects were successful in raising awareness of and demand for broadband. Both networks highlighted that community involvement is a key driver for the ongoing sustainability of such networks. It was also clear that it is key to have ongoing support, and where this is voluntary this can be very beneficial, however professional technical support may well provide a more sustainable solution. In respect of the satellite backhaul, full analysis has not been provided by the supplier, however user feedback indicated that in spite of the initial problems faced, the service was acceptable – in the absence of a terrestrial alternative. In both cases users confirmed they would be continuing to use the network and marketing is now ongoing to help increase the number of subscribers and maintain network sustainability. However it is recognised that if a terrestrial solution were to be provided this may provide a more cost effective and sustainable solution for these areas – although some users have stated they would continue with this network even if a terrestrial solution became available.

Broadband Demand analysis – Scottish Enterprise

K-Map

The Executive and its agencies needed to plot current provision and take-up statistics, to monitor developments and provide marketing campaign support. The most effective way to do this was graphically using a geographic information system, so that specific areas could be identified against a map backdrop. Datasets on addresses as well as broadband availability were integrated onto the **K-Map system** to enable vital strategic analysis.

A subset of this assembled information repository is now being made available to public and private sector stakeholders via Scottish Enterprise's online interactive K-map portal through which users are able to ascertain extent and status of broadband availability; potential demand; and population density. This information can be queried and viewed from national level down to individual postcode units. Broadband availability can also be ascertained from a dedicated public website (www.broadbandforscotland.co.uk), through which visitors are able to type in their postcode to determine the provision of broadband in their particular area, including links to suppliers.

Satellite-based broadband - Highlands and Islands Enterprise and three Scottish Enterprise Local Enterprise Companies have piloted schemes that offer assistance with the installation costs of satellite-broadband technology. Business benefits have been monitored as have several issues associated with satellite broadband, such as signal loss in bad weather and its position relative to tariffs for other fast Internet technologies.

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Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Programme for Government commits Government to *“working with the private sector, to develop and begin to implement a strategy that will ensure that all of Northern Ireland has a world class telecommunications infrastructure in terms of broadband capacity, access and cost”*. To advance that agenda the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is implementing a range of complementary initiatives designed to progressively develop telecommunications infrastructure, stimulate demand for broadband, and develop broadband applications to both support the knowledge based and driven economy and to promote digital inclusion. These initiatives include a major tender for broadband services across N. Ireland; technology and company neutral pilot projects under the UK Broadband Fund; a flagship project addressing broadband applications, content and services; a public sector aggregation exercise and, via Invest Northern Ireland, a programme of demand side initiatives. This comprehensive package of measures complements both the “e” Europe Action Plan and the UK Broadband Strategy.

Vision for Broadband in N. Ireland

On 7 October 2003 the DETI Minister launched a new vision for telecommunications in N. Ireland entitled “Broadband Northern Ireland – Fully Connected”. This vision, (which can be viewed at <http://www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/downutildoc?id=201>,) is to have a fully connected N. Ireland with equitable access to cost effective broadband services for all. It also set challenging targets for N. Ireland:

- To be the leading broadband region in the UK;
- To be the first region in the UK to have 100% coverage of broadband services;
- 100% broadband access with a minimum of 512k for all households and businesses by end of 2005;
- 12% of households and 20% of business take-up of broadband by end of 2005; and
- 100% broadband at 2Mbps at cost competitive prices by end of 2006.

UK Broadband Fund

In October 2001, DETI secured a £1.46m share of the DTI's UK Broadband Fund (£30m) for Northern Ireland. Subsequently the Department issued 3 Calls for proposals seeking feasibility studies and pilot actions to explore innovative ways of extending broadband technologies to a wider range of users than is currently commercially viable.

There were approximately 110 applications for funding before the fund closed on 31 March 2004. A total of 43 projects have been successful and all of the

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£1.46m funding has been allocated (see Annex A attached). DETI will be undertaking a full evaluation of the UK Broadband Fund in N Ireland before the end of 2004.

Local Access Tender for the Provision of Broadband Services

On 7 May 2003 a Prior Information Notice (PIN) was published in the Official Journal of the European Union to alert the market that it was the Department's intention to seek tenders for the provision of broadband services. In response to the high level of market interest from some 40 broadband service providers a number of information days were held in Belfast and Birmingham during May and June.

In line with an announcement by the DETI Minister an Invitation to Tender for this contract for the provision of broadband services was published in the European Journal on 22 July 2003.

From 27 responses received on 22 August 2003, 6 were short listed and issued with an Invitation to Negotiate on 10 October 2003. The contract was awarded to BT on 29 March 2004.

BT has indicated that it will have enabled all of Northern Ireland's 192 exchanges (ADSL technology) by March 2005, reaching just over 90% of the population. The remaining homes and businesses will be given access to broadband through wireless technology by December 2005 in line with the requirements of the contract.

Flagship Broadband Applications, Content and Services Call

On 24 June 2002 DETI issued an invitation seeking expressions of interest in possible telecommunication flagship projects that demonstrated innovation and design in the use of broadband within Northern Ireland.

The invitation was extended to local and international companies and organizations to bring forward sustainable leading edge projects addressing broadband applications, content, or services. Nineteen proposals were accepted for consideration of which 3 proposals were short listed.

An announcement of funding to a proposal from Derry City Council (DCC) and the University of Ulster (UU) was made in December 2003. The project was split into three components; one covering the intelligent classroom concepts led by the UU; one with DCC in the provision of the broadband e-government services and finally one covering the e-tourism aspects of the project.

It is anticipated that the first phase of this project will commence in July 2004.

Demand Stimulation

Demand stimulation activities, to complement DETI's supply-side initiatives, are the responsibility of DETI's enterprise agency Invest NI. It's Broadband Stimulation Programme, which was launched in Londonderry on 23 June 2003

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seeks to raise awareness of broadband technologies and the economic benefits they can bring, and so increase uptake of broadband services by business.

The programme consists of a wide range of awareness-raising activities backed by a programme of practical intervention that is both advisory and financial. Through Invest NI's e-Solution Centre at Lisburn, assisted by regional and sectoral Broadband Advisers, expert impartial face-to-face support is delivered to companies. In addition a programme of local broadband roadshows, a total of 16 events have been completed.

The programme seeks to help small and medium sized enterprises to take advantage of high-speed Internet connections using any broadband technology. Support is available at 40% of the installation and first year running costs for eligible companies up to a maximum of £5,000. To date Invest NI has supported almost 1327 companies, in meeting its target of 2000 companies by December 2004.

Public Sector Broadband Aggregation

Following completion of a feasibility study led by DETI the decision to proceed with public sector broadband aggregation was made by the Permanent Secretary's group on 29 August 2003. This decision was subsequently endorsed by all Ministers and publicly announced by Ian Pearson on 7 October 2003.

A Project Team within the Department of Finance and Personnel has been set up to start work on aggregation, with the longer term view of establishing a Northern Ireland Aggregation Board along the lines of the Regional Aggregation Boards currently operating in England. Ministerial approval to this approach was given on 11 February 2004.

Interreg III

This EU Fund to promote cross-border integration has allocated €7.2 Million euro under Interreg IIIa for cross border telecommunications projects. DETI and the Irish Department of Communication Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR) are managing this. The call for projects was made on the 26 March 2004 and 18 expressions of interest were received by the closing date, 30 April 2004. 14 detailed projects are currently undergoing evaluation. The first two projects have been approved by the Special European Union Programme Body steering committee.

Digital Island

DETI's Telecoms Policy Unit is currently addressing a number of cross border telecoms issues through the Digital Island initiative. This is a policy-level framework, put forward by InterTradelreland, DETE and DETI, aimed at seeking the fullest exploitation of the digital technologies by businesses across the island. Telecoms Policy Unit, together with DCMNR and Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment (DETE) has agreed to take

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forward a strand within the Digital Island model on ICT Infrastructure and Services. Issues currently being addressed include:

- all Island tariffs for data and mobile communications;
- all Island telephone numbering ranges;
- spectrum roaming in the border regions; and
- cross-border infrastructure.

CURRENT BROADBAND FUND PROJECTS

ANNEX A

BBF 001/02	WesternConnect Ltd	A Trial to Deploy a Wireless Broadband Network in Derry
BBF 002/02	WesternConnect Ltd	Broadband Access Business Applications
BBF 004/02	Derry City Council	Study to Identify Sustainable Broadband Telecommunications Solutions for the Derry City Council area
BBF 006/02	Northern Ireland Advisory Committee on Telecommunications	A Project to conduct research into the attitudes and awareness of Broadband internet access technologies in Northern Ireland
BBF 009/02	Down District Council	The Provision, Use and Demand for Broadband within the SEED Council areas
BBF 010/02	Fermanagh District Council	The Provision, Use and Demand for Broadband within the Fermanagh District Council area
BBF 011/02	Strabane District Council	The Provision, Use and Demand for Broadband within the Strabane District Council area
BBF 012/02	Omagh District Council	Broadband feasibility study for the Omagh District Council area
BBF 013/02	Dungannon and South Tyrone District Council	Broadband feasibility study for the Dungannon and South Tyrone District Council area
BBF 025/02	WesternConnect Ltd/Internet Concepts	A project to develop the ICT and broadband capabilities of the Construction and Engineering Sectors in the North West
BBF 027/02	Moyle District Council	A Project to Examine the Provision, Use and Demand for Broadband Technology in Moyle, Ballymoney, Larne and Ballymena Borough and District Councils
BBF 036/02	StreamOn.net Ltd	Feasibility study into the Development of a Virtual Trade Fair and Business Broadcasting Channel
BBF 039/02	ACe Associates	Feasibility Study into the deployment and use of a high bandwidth network in the Greater Belfast area

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BBF 046/02	Derry City Council	Broadband Stimulation Initiative for the Derry City Council area
BBF 047/02	KBLonline	A Proposal to demonstrate broadband access in rural areas without using incumbent Telco infrastructure
BBF 055/02	Antrim Borough Council	The Provision, Use and Demand for Broadband Technology in the Antrim Borough Council area
BBF 056/02	Cookstown District Council	The Provision, Use and Demand for Broadband Technology in the Cookstown District Council area
BBF101/03	David Brunnen Advanced Business Facilities Ltd	I-Burst Pioneer Project at NI Science Park
BBF102/03	Gordon Welsh EPEC	Broadband for the Social Economy
BBF 103/03	Caroline Mulvenna NIACT	NIACT Annual Conference
BBF 104/03	Brendan Hegarty Fermanagh DC	Demand Stimulation in Fermanagh DC
BBF 105/03	Margie Greer BTNI	Demand Stimulation to Enable 19 Exchanges in NI
BBF106/03	Margie Greer BTNI	Proposal For A NI ASP Portal
BBF107/03	Pat Gorman The Institution of Electrical Engineers	Connecting Commerce, Creativity & Community
BBF109/03	Sean Convery - Applied Networks Ltd	Broadband Wireless Network Technology Trial
BBF110/03	Jacqui O'Neill - Newtownabbey Borough Council	Feasibility Study Into Provision of Pilot BB Projects in Newtownabbey & Carrickfergus BC areas
BBF111/03	Paul O'Callaghan - NTR Broadband	Proposal For Provision Of Wireless BB Services to the Lisburn Area
BBF112/03	Paul O'Callaghan - NTR Broadband	Proposal For provision Of Wireless BB Services to the Strabane Area
BBF113/03	Marcus Porter- BTNI	Proposal For A Broadband trial in Derrylin & Ballinmallard
BBF114/03	Adrian Lyon- Aperture	Aperture Mesh Wireless Broadband Trial
BBF121/04	Stuart McLean – BT	Proposal for a satellite in Omagh
BBF122/03	Kerry Anne Robinson – BT	Proposal for the Trial of SHDSL - Enniskillen, Derrylin and Ballinamallard
BBF126/03	Darryl Collins - Banjax	Digital Asset Management System
BBF129/03	Darryl Collins - Banjax	Webtoon Infrastructure
BBF130/03	Michael Staley – Cinemagic	Broadband event management tool and services
BBF131/03	John Scovell - Academy	Broadband Photographic Library
BBF134/03	Fastband - Simon Spalding	Broadband Mobile Wireless Trial
BBF201/04	Valerie Brown - South Belfast Partnership Board	Establishment of a South Belfast Tourism and Virtual Business Network
BBF204/04	Stuart McLean - BT	Ballynotslow

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BBF205/04	QUB	Efficient High Resolution Digital Image Viewing and Delivery Over the BB Internet
BBF207/04	Bytel Ltd	Investigation into the Impact of IPV6 Over the Internet Backbone Within a Semi-Closed Test Environment
BBF216/04	Strabane District Council	Bring Extreme Broadband to Orchard Road Industrial Estate, Strabane