Edwina Hart MBE OSTJ AM  
Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

31 January 2013

Dear Edwina,

Broadband services in Wales

I am writing on behalf of the Welsh Affairs Committee in the House of Commons in respect of the Welsh Government's recent announcement to roll-out "superfast" broadband to fourteen areas in 2013-14. As you are aware, the Welsh Affairs Committee published a report on 'Broadband services in Wales' in September 2012.

The Committee welcomes the Welsh Government's announcement, which will hopefully be an important step to meet your commitment to provide Welsh businesses access to next-generation broadband at a minimum 30mbps speed by the middle of 2016. The Committee noted the ambitious targets of both the UK Government and Welsh Government in respect of superfast broadband and concluded that both Governments would deserve great credit if they were achieved.

The Committee did express concerns, however, that too much focus may have been placed on the roll-out of superfast broadband at the expense of ensuring that the needs of those without any broadband service at all are met. The first priority, we believed, was to ensure that the needs of the approximately 90,000 homes in Wales which currently do not have access to broadband are addressed as soon as possible.

The Committee would be grateful if the Welsh Government could provide information in respect of the following two issues:

(a) the criteria used to choose the fourteen selected areas for the roll-out of superfast broadband; and  
(b) the efforts being taken to provide a good broadband service to those who currently do not have access to broadband.

I would be grateful if the Welsh Government can provide the Committee with information in respect of these two important points. We will continue to monitor the broadband strategies of the UK and Welsh Governments over the course of this Parliament.
Yours sincerely,

David T.C. Davies MP
Chair, Welsh Affairs Select Committee