Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/00245/13

David Davies MP
Chair
Welsh Affairs Select Committee
welshcom@parliament.uk

20th February 2013

Dear David

Thank you for your letter dated 31 January 2013 in regards to the criteria used to identify our first fourteen local authorities to benefit from the roll-out of superfast broadband in Wales, and our efforts to provide an uplifted broadband service to hard to reach areas.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that premises across Wales have access to next generation broadband, and we are working in partnership with BT through the Superfast Cymru programme to bring the benefits of fast fibre broadband to those areas outside the planned commercial footprint in Wales.

In establishing the roll-out plans the Welsh Government ensured that a variety of priorities were taken into consideration, including economics, local demographics, geography and engineering necessities. A range of local authorities across Wales have been targeted, and roll-out will begin in 2013/14 in both urban and more hard to reach rural areas. We have worked closely with BT to ensure that the roll-out is as efficient as possible in order to affordably meet the challenging timescales for the programme.

Superfast Cymru seeks to ensure that, when combined with commercial roll-out, 96% of premises across Wales will have access to fibre broadband. This means that around 55,000 premises in Wales are currently not in scope under the programme.
We are in the process of finalising options to address these remaining premises, and information on a new scheme will be available in the spring. Furthermore, we are working closely with BT to maximise our significant investment to ensure that we tackle as many as these premises as possible, potential through new or alternate technologies, but still under through the Superfast Cymru programme.