

From the Office of the Minister



Department of

**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**

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Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Room 338
Northern Ireland Assembly
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26 May 2015

Dear Mr McElduff

During question time on the 11 May 2015 the former DETI Minister agreed to provide you with a written update on the precise measures that are planned for the 2015-16 year to improve broadband coverage in rural west Tyrone.

As the Minister pointed out at the time, West Tyrone has already benefited substantially from the roll-out of the Next Generation Broadband Project which led to over 121 cabinets being fibre-enabled across the constituency, making them capable of delivering broadband services of up to 80Mbps.

In addition, under the contract awarded to BT in February 2014, for delivery of the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP), infrastructure upgrades have already been deployed across a number of telephone exchange areas serving West Tyrone (as listed in the Official Report). This work, which includes 43 cabinet upgrades, has led to improvements in broadband access for almost 6,000 premises across the Constituency. Details of the number of cabinets that have been upgraded in each exchange area to date are attached. Further information on cabinet upgrades can be found at <http://nibroadband.com/the-big-build>.

As well as FTTC, the technologies being deployed under this project include Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) and Copper Re-arrangement (CuRE). I can confirm that to date, FTTP has been deployed in the Beragh and Omagh exchange areas and CuRE in the Ballygawley, Beragh, Fintona and Omagh exchange areas.

It is my understanding that further improvement work is expected to take place in other exchange areas serving West Tyrone as the project progresses. Consumers can access details of indicative completion dates for improvement work in their area by accessing the postcode checker which can be found at <http://www.online.detini.gov.uk/Broadband/Start.aspx>.

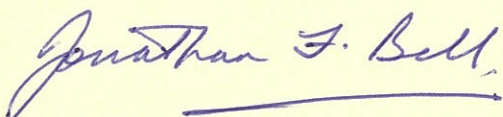
Recognising that NIBIP will not deliver improvements for every premise, my Department, in February 2015, awarded a second contract to BT for the Superfast Broadband Roll-out Programme which will deliver superfast broadband services, with speeds of at least 24 Mbps, to 38,000 premises across Northern Ireland by 31 December 2017.

BT has commenced the project with an extensive survey and design process which will take several months to complete. I am therefore unable to identify at this stage which specific areas within West Tyrone will benefit. The postcodes that were included in the intervention area for the project can be found at http://www.detini.gov.uk/srp_postcodes_list.pdf?rev=0 and further details will be published on NI Direct as they become available.

In addition to the initiatives aimed at improving access to fixed-line broadband services, my Department has also invested in projects which led to the deployment of an extensive fixed-wireless broadband network across many parts of West Tyrone and capable of providing high speed broadband services. Coverage areas include, but are not limited to Broughderg, Carrickmore, Castlederg, Clady, Drumquin, Eskragh, Gortin, Greencastle, and Plumbridge.

Satellite broadband services are also widely available across Northern Ireland and from a variety of providers.

I will arrange for a copy of the letter to be sent to the Speaker's Office and that a copy will be placed in the Assembly Library.



JONATHAN BELL MLA
Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

CABINETS UPGRADED IN EXCHANGE AREAS SERVING WEST TYRONE

Exchange	Number of Cabinets
Ballygawley	7
Beragh	8
Bready	5
Carrickmore	10
Castlederg	13
Dromore	7
Drumquin	5
Dunamanagh	8
Fintona	6
Gortin	5
Mountfield	4
Newtownstewart	9
Omagh	39
Sion Mills	5
Strabane	24
Trillick	2
Tulnacross	7
Total	164