

North Skye Community Broadband Project Launches.

The North Skye Community Broadband project aims to bring robust and reliable superfast broadband to the community to make up for the lack of investment by BT in the area.

BT are currently rolling out Superfast Broadband to a handful of the more densely populated areas of the highlands and islands, but there are no alternative plans to provide high speed broadband in the majority of areas. The only way to guarantee Superfast Broadband reaches the remote and rural areas of Skye is for the community to take matters into their own hands.

Economic & Social Benefits

There are many benefits to improved broadband performance, both economic and social, reliable fast broadband is now seen as an essential third utility after water and power. Faster broadband effects how we work, how we socialise and how we entertain ourselves.

The economic benefits of faster broadband include the possibility of allowing more home based businesses, increased innovation and productivity in business, more jobs and faster communication.

Removing the digital divide

The social benefits can range from better access to services and improved healthcare, to enabling people to be more informed, better educated and more socially and culturally enriched.

It could be something as simple as having a Skype call with a friend without worrying about your connection, or could be something big that effects your business, like offering your customers the option to pay by hand held credit card machine at a craft fair or producer's market. It doesn't matter if you are in a city or in a small village on an island on the West Coast of Scotland, Superfast Broadband will remove the digital divide for communities and small businesses creating a more even playing field, whilst retaining the advantages of living in a beautiful landscape.

Next Steps

The Glendale Trust are leading a community project with the help of Community Broadband Scotland and HIE which will establish the current levels of broadband provision in the North Skye areas of Glendale, Duntulm and Waternish. The initial aim is to prove the potential demand for a sustainable community broadband project which will deliver 'Next Generation' broadband speeds.

Similar projects have already begun on the Isles of Mull, Iona, Colonsay, Luing, Lismore, Jura, Craginish and parts of Islay.

“It is clear that if the remote parts of Skye wish to remain sustainable they must keep pace with the provision of vital services. Proper super-fast broadband is essential for these communities, if we don't take action now we will quite simply miss out. This project offers a huge opportunity to have vital state of the art robust infrastructure delivered. It will be exciting to see the communities in each of these areas working together to meet the needs of the businesses and individuals of North Skye”. Elgar Finlay who is leading the project on behalf of the Glendale Trusts Broadband Working Group.

The process will start with an invitation to all members of the community to complete a questionnaire that will help establish the levels of interest in the project.

To hear more details and information about the project we would welcome all to attend the public meetings in each of the affected areas

- Waternish 28th April 7:30pm. Waternish Community Hall
- Duntulm, 29th April 7:30pm in the Kilmuir Community Hall
- Glendale 30th April 7:30pm in the Glendale Hall.

Information can also be found via the North Skye Broadband Facebook page.