



Country Land &
Business Association
RURAL ECONOMY IS OUR BUSINESS

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RURAL BROADBAND: The private sector position



The background to rural broadband in perspective



- The need and case for broadband in rural areas is now undeniable
- Significant progress has been made since 2002
- However, there is that percentage who are and will remain disadvantaged and marginalised
- So what needs to be done ?

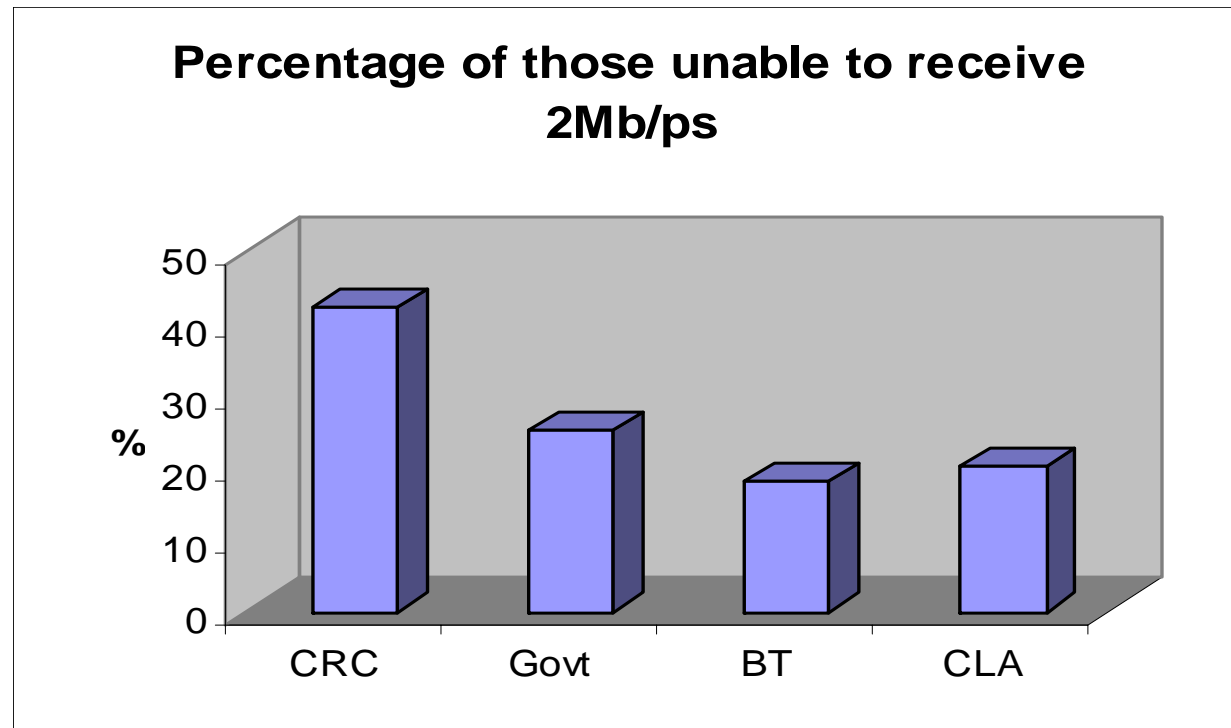
Rural Broadband: Some facts



- If there are **476,000** registered rural businesses, a 20% not-spot figure equates to: 95,200
- So **95,200** businesses are directly affected by not having broadband access



Rural broadband - some more facts or a difference of opinion ?



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- A range of different figures: CRC 42%, Government 25%, CLA 20%, BT 18%
- Even lowest figure means over 85,500 'not spot' businesses
- This is the first challenge





The Rural – Urban Digital Divide

- Undeniable that there is a clear digital divide.
- **But:**
- Broadband also illustrates the social rural – urban divide
- ‘ They don’t need it’
- ‘ Have you ever seen a poor farmer ?’
- The conclusion: rural areas have still to convince their urban neighbours. This takes time and the need to educate

The Business Impact

- Without effective and adequate broadband, rural businesses are unable to compete
- This is the real un-level playing field
- For those trying to diversify, either very difficult or impossible
- For those trying to secure rental income, the equation is simple: no broadband = no tenants



The Social Aspect

- Another equation: no broadband = **social exclusion**
- Education
- Health
- Social mobility
- Social interaction



The Government and 'Digital Britain'



- Universal service commitment of 2Mb/ps by 2012 to every door
- Different types of technologies to be used
- Paid for using some existing government funds
- Planning for next generation access (that is, superfast broadband) to be in place by 2017
- **BUT**: is this a credible strategy ?

How practical is this ?

- Will it work ?
- Are we really missing the point ?
- Essential that we get the basics right
- How much money is actually needed ?



Two Mb/ps or more ?

- Clearly, 2Mb/ps is being touted as the new benchmark
- But many businesses do not need 2Mb/ps
- And frankly, who actually needs 100 Mb/ps ?



NGA – Superfast broadband

- The new “sexy” subject
- Has to be FTTH, not FTTC
- Broadband structure has to be future proofed
- What about investment ?
- The political parties’ views
- The CLA vision



A new idea

- A bottomed up approach
- Local community broadband
- Grants at parish household level
- Getting the infrastructure right

