



News Release

20 January 2009

PANEL RESEARCH FINDS A FAST- GROWING NETWORK OF COMMUNITY-LED BROADBAND SCHEMES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

In its latest report, *Local initiatives on next generation access in the UK*, the Communications Consumer Panel has mapped a surprisingly extensive and growing network of community-led fast broadband schemes across the UK.

The Consumer Panel's review of local networks of super-fast fibre broadband found schemes and pilots across the country from Ashford in Kent and King's Lynn in East Anglia, to the Scottish Highlands. "There are around 40 local broadband schemes," reports author and Panel member Roger Darlington explained. "This is not necessarily a totally comprehensive review, but will certainly surprise many."

He highlighted examples such as the Digital Region project in South Yorkshire that aims to connect all households and businesses in the region "which would give fast internet access to at least 500,000 people.

"This is the most comprehensive review to date of community broadband schemes. The various schemes are of very different sizes and at very different stages of development, but collectively they show a range of funding and business models, and various technical delivery options. All this regional and local activity should contribute significantly to the national debate on the timing and form of next generation access roll-out in the UK," Roger Darlington said.

The Communications Consumer Panel would welcome further information on any of the initiatives mentioned and on any new schemes not covered by this review. Please contact us via our website www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk or e-mail alistair.bridge@communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk or ring 020 7783 4195.

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information. The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley (Chairman)
- Ruth Evans (Deputy Chairman)
- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook (member for Wales)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

For further information about Communications Consumer Panel members go to <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/about/>

- *Local initiatives on next generation access in the UK* is available online at www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk
- Francesco Caio report: *Review of barriers to investment in next generation access: final report*. <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file47788.pdf>

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