



10<sup>th</sup> August 2012  
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**Please respond to:**

**June Love  
DSG Secretariat  
Dounreay.com  
Traill House  
7 Olrig Street  
Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7BJ**

**Tel: 01847 804612  
Fax: 01847 804615  
Email: [info@dounreaystakeholdergroup.org](mailto:info@dounreaystakeholdergroup.org)**

Dear Sir/Madam

### **HIE'S BROADBAND CONSULTATION**

The Dounreay Stakeholder Group (DSG) welcomes the opportunity to respond to HIE's broadband consultation.

The DSG is represented by over 20 organisations and therefore this response is one that is generally agreed by most organisations. However, there are some organisations, who may not agree entirely with this submission and therefore these organisations have been encouraged to provide their own response.

The following is the main points raised by DSG members, the DSG

- supports the provision of points of presence at key sites which will support the wider economic benefits for business to work more effectively from digital connectivity.
- is surprised that there is no mention of John O'Groats as a potential site for digital improvements given the significant redevelopment of the international landmark.
- It would be useful to understand the locations of the Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC).
- Given the efforts of Caithness and North Sutherland to move away from its dependency on Dounreay and grow a new economy based on energy and business services we strongly believe that priority should be given to those areas that can help existing businesses to grow and to attract new inward investment to the area. We would like to see Caithness & North Sutherland being the first area for superfast broadband to be rolled out.

- In areas within Caithness & North Sutherland it is important to encourage small local businesses to start-up and/or grow. In outlying areas computer speeds are very slow, many of the lines are dated and have not been replaced. During large portions of the day, especially at peak times, speeds drop to near dial-up speeds. These consistently poor speeds makes it difficult to conduct business on a level playing field that other areas can offer and given the drive to encourage people to live, work and invest in Caithness/NS it is important that broadband speeds are available over the entire area.
- We understand there is a high bandwidth link installed in Castletown, intended to link up the Faeroe islands but this has never been used. Could this resource be utilised in order to maximise the benefit in our area. Such a link could allow the potential to host a large data centre which could use energy from the emerging renewable industry.

Yours sincerely

*Sent electronically without signature*

**Bob Earnshaw**  
DSG Chairman