



Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme LEADER Broadband Challenge Fund - Guidance for Applicants

Introduction

This fact sheet sets out the arrangements for a Rural Broadband Challenge Fund that will deliver support for Broadband projects in rural areas of Aberdeenshire.

For applicants applying to the Rural Broadband Challenge Fund through the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme, please note that the eligible area for the Broadband initiative is the Aberdeenshire Local Authority area minus the western part, which is covered by Cairngorms LEADER and settlements with population greater than 10,000.

Information on the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme can be accessed on the website: www.aberdeenshireleader.org.uk

The application form and guidance can be accessed from the following link:
http://www.aberdeenshireleader.org/Application_Process/application_form.html

Applicants should ensure that the project names are clearly labelled with “Broadband” as a prefix on application forms eg Broadband - “Fibreoptic Fyvie” to allow SRDP payment of Broadband projects to be identified from other LEADER projects.

1. Process

The Scottish Government has announced funding of more than £800,000 to enhance Broadband provision across rural Scotland through the establishment of the Rural Broadband Challenge Fund.

Rural groups, community organisations and business partnerships will be able to apply for a share of the Challenge Fund by submitting an application to the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme.

The final decision on applications will be made by a panel set up by Scottish Government to consider submissions to the Challenge Fund from across Scotland.

2. Timing

The deadline for submitting Broadband applications to the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme is **Friday 27 August 2010**.

The Rural Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (LAG) will consider the applications at the LAG meeting scheduled **07 September 2010**. Bids will then be submitted **in mid September** by the LAG to the Scottish Government for consideration under the Challenge Fund.

Scottish Government will aim to hold an assessment panel in **October 2010** and announce awards thereafter. **A summary of the Challenge Fund Process is attached at Annex A.**

3. What type of project is eligible?

Projects should be in keeping with the LEADER principles and applications made to Aberdeenshire LEADER should have a positive rural development impact which they consider improved broadband access would bring.

Examples include: community groups wishing to upgrade exchanges, pilot projects into next generation broadband, supporting a business collective to access better broadband etc.

4. Who can apply

Applications for financial assistance will be accepted from:

- Individuals (although the project must support LEADER principles and demonstrate wider rural development benefits)
- Constituted community groups
- Public organisations and agencies
- Partnerships, trusts and other non-governmental organisations
- Social enterprises
- Collaborative business/ community organisations (constituted groups).

Where the key benefits are for settlements with populations of over 10,000 (which are excluded from the Scotland LEADER Programme) applications will also be ineligible for Rural Broadband funding.

5. What support is available?

There is no limit set for the value of project bids to Scottish Government or applications to LAGs. One million euros (approximately £800,000) is the total funding available in the Challenge Fund. No match funding is required, ie: 100% of the project costs may be funded under the Challenge Fund.

Applicants in Aberdeenshire may if they so wish make a contribution to the costs of the project, thus demonstrating leverage.

6. Application process and criteria

(a) LAG assessments:

Rural Aberdeenshire LAG will use the existing application forms and assessment procedures to consider Broadband projects. Once applications are approved the bid for

Rural Broadband Challenge Fund will be prepared by the LAG for Scottish Government consideration by the deadline of **24 September 2010**.

Applications should ensure that the project names are clearly labelled with "Broadband" as a prefix on application forms.

Successful projects will also require a BRN (Business Reference Number) from the relevant RPID Area Office to allow payments to be made. The Aberdeenshire LEADER Administration will provide guidance on obtaining a BRN once approvals are identified.

The BRN is the identifier used when the payment is reported to the EC. Part of this process will also ensure that any support from other EC sources is considered although this information is already recorded on the LAG application form.

The Rural Aberdeenshire LAG will consider applications to determine local needs and assess the merits of any bids received.

In assessing applications consideration should be given to how improvements can be made to enable on line applications to be made for SRDP and other rural development grant support.

(b) Scottish Government assessment

Bids will be assessed by an independent panel consisting of representatives of the Scottish Government and stakeholders.

The criteria for assessing bids under the Challenge Fund are outlined in **Annex B**.

Following assessment of bids in October, LAGs will be informed of the outcome shortly after. Claims will be made in the usual manner with applicants claiming grant directly from the LAG.

7. General conditions

The LEADER conditions of grant apply.

Projects cannot start until official approval has been granted by the Scottish Government. Project activity and claims should be completed within 2 years of the official start date, or the end date of the LEADER Programme, whichever is sooner.

8. Funding restrictions

The LEADER funding restrictions apply.

In order to provide some additional support additional background is attached at **Annex C** along with updated exchanges in rural areas and a broadband speed guide.

Application process BROADBAND CHALLENGE FUND PROCESS

- 1 Challenge Fund opens**
- 2 LAGs consider approach for their areas**
- 3 LAGs assemble local strategic bid for finance:**
 - **Use technical advice (up to £2000 available per LAG)**
 - **Invite local projects**
 - **Discuss with strategic partners**
- 4 LAGs submit bids by deadline**
- 5 SG assesses bids and advise LAGs**
- 6 LAGs initiate projects and approved projects claim grant through LAG**
- 7 LAGs submit claims for projects in quarterly claim pack with Broadband identifier**
- 8 LAGs submit invoices to Scottish Government as they occur for technical support in assembling and assessing bids**

RURAL BROADBAND CHALLENGE FUND – criteria to be used**Scoring Criteria**

| | | Weighting |
|---|--|------------------|
| 1 | Contribution to National Outcomes | 3 |
| 2 | Contribution to Leader outcomes | 3 |
| 3 | Area and population covered | 2 |
| 4 | Evidence of broadband need assessment | 2 |
| 5 | Impact on jobs and businesses in area covered | 3 |
| 6 | Added value of proposals to present schemes for broadband coverage in area | 4 |
| 7 | Delivery mechanism and timescale | 2 |

Broadband Background and key messages**Annex C**

There has been significant activity in relation to broadband development with availability in Scotland now over 99%.

Following broadband projects delivered previously and successful completion of the Scottish Government's Broadband Reach Project in March 2010, basic broadband coverage, defined as 512 kbps (kilobits per second), is now generally available throughout Scotland. This is consistent with the Scottish Government's current broadband commitment which is provision of basic broadband to known demand.

In a separate project, BT is investing £3 million in a programme of upgrades to 81 capacity-limited rural and remote exchanges located throughout Scotland, by agreement with the Scottish Government. The programme is now over two thirds complete; the remainder will be complete by the end of November 2010.

This latest announcement of support under SRDP means that communities will have the opportunity to define the broadband needs for their area and, with technical assistance via the LEADER Local Action Groups, develop a project which meets these needs. It will then be for the Local Action Groups to assess the merits of these applications and bid to the Challenge Fund to take these forward.

Following the announcement of a Broadband Challenge Fund LAGs may wish to consider any other communication within their area.

In order to provide some additional support for LAGs the attached background on updated exchanges in rural areas and broadband speed guide may be helpful.

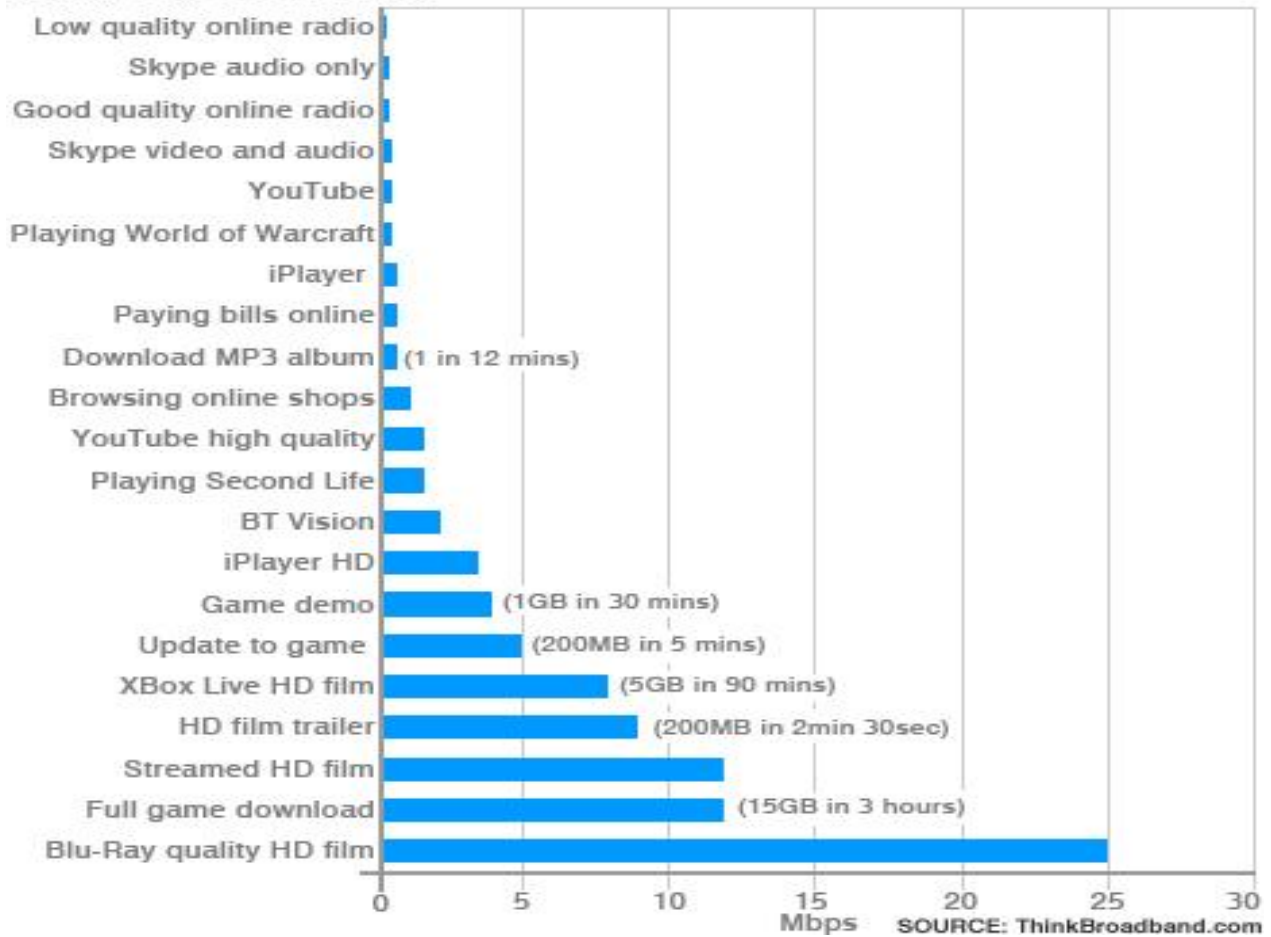
Additional background Information on Exchange Upgrades

The following 81 exchanges are being upgraded. The first 52 (numbers 1-52) are being upgraded through the installation of additional capacity. The other 29 (numbers 53-81) are being upgraded to full platform ADSL.

| | Exchange | Indicative Upgrade Date | | Exchange | Indicative Upgrade Date |
|----|------------------|--------------------------------|----|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Abbey St Bathans | Completed | 42 | Applecross | Completed |
| 2 | Kilfinan | Completed | 43 | Kinlocheil | Completed |
| 3 | Laggan | Completed | 44 | Colintraive | Completed |
| 4 | Lempitlaw | Completed | 45 | Fern | Completed |
| 5 | Scatwell | Completed | 46 | Menmuir | Completed |
| 6 | Drummuir | Completed | 47 | Orton | Completed |
| 7 | Inversnaid | Completed | 48 | Whitsome | Completed |
| 8 | Mulben | Completed | 49 | Out Skerries | 02/07/2010 |
| 9 | Ardgour | Completed | 50 | Kilchattan Bay | 18/08/2010 |
| 10 | Bridge of Balgie | Completed | 51 | Drumbeg | 27/08/2010 |
| 11 | Bridge of Gaur | Completed | 52 | Glenelg | 03/09/2010 |
| 12 | Glenborrodale | Completed | 53 | Gigha | Completed |
| 13 | Glenferness | Completed | 54 | Garvald | Completed |
| 14 | Killilan | Completed | 55 | Grantshouse | Completed |
| 15 | North Erradale | Completed | 56 | Hoy | 11/06/2010 |
| 16 | Stobo | Completed | 57 | Loganswell | Completed |
| 17 | Tummel Bridge | Completed | 58 | Longformacus | Completed |
| 18 | Papa Westray | Completed | 59 | Straiton | Completed |
| 19 | Pennyghael | Completed | 60 | Strathardle | Completed |
| 20 | Amulree | Completed | 61 | Burravoe | 16/07/2010 |
| 21 | Borthwickbrae | Completed | 62 | Fetlar | 25/06/2010 |
| 22 | Durisdeer | Completed | 63 | Gutcher | 25/06/2010 |
| 23 | Elvanfoot | Completed | 64 | Jura | 09/07/2010 |
| 24 | Loch Scavaig | Completed | 65 | Coll | 23/07/2010 |
| 25 | Marrburn | Completed | 66 | Kinlochewe | 07/07/2010 |
| 26 | Trossachs | Completed | 67 | Gilloch | 21/07/2010 |
| 27 | Tarskavaig | Completed | 68 | Tongue | 09/08/2010 |
| 28 | Advie | Completed | 69 | Achiltibuie | 12/08/2010 |
| 29 | Butterstone | Completed | 70 | Lyth | 16/08/2010 |
| 30 | The Craigs | Completed | 71 | Colonsay | 20/09/2010 |
| 31 | Trochry | Completed | 72 | Durness | 08/09/2010 |
| 32 | Bargrennan | Completed | 73 | Birsay | 19/10/2010 |
| 33 | Machrie | Completed | 74 | Uig | 19/10/2010 |
| 34 | Scourie | Completed | 75 | Pirnmill | 10/11/2010 |
| 35 | Slidery | Completed | 76 | Craigie | 17/11/2010 |
| 36 | Berriedale | Completed | 77 | Duntulm | 17/11/2010 |
| 37 | Fair Isle | Completed | 78 | Staffin | 26/11/2010 |
| 38 | Kinbrace | Completed | 79 | New Luce | 26/11/2010 |
| 39 | Rosehall | Completed | 80 | Vidlin | 26/11/2010 |
| 40 | Westerdale | Completed | 81 | Lismore | 26/11/2010 |
| 41 | Whitehouse | Completed | | | |

Download Speeds Needed For Online Tasks

DOWNLOAD OF CONTENT



Sources:

Ofcom (2009); *UK Broadband Speeds 2009*

www.thinkbroadband.com

www.broadband.co.uk

www.moneysupermarket.com

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