

**Date: 17 July 2012**

**Andrew Campling**

General Manager, London  
BT Group  
81 Newgate Street  
London EC1A 7AJ

Dear Andrew,

**Broadband and wifi provision in London**

First of all, I would like to thank you for attending the Economy Committee meeting this week on broadband and wifi provision in London. The Committee found it was a very productive discussion in setting out the challenges London faces and some potential solutions. I appreciate the time you have taken to engage with our work, both in coming to the meeting and preparing additional information afterwards.

We always welcome constructive feedback from those involved in the Committee's work. I felt it important I address the issues you raised in your letter, including where you have been critical of our approach.

As you know the Committee used the recent GLA Intelligence report, *London's digital economy*, which is based on the 2010 Annual Broadband Quality Survey conducted by the Said Business School and University of Oviedo. I understand the methodological issues with this research that you have pointed out. However we believe this is robust research from a credible source, and it is certainly the most comprehensive and up-to-date study of the broadband quality in which London is compared to other cities.

There are other sources of evidence, as you have highlighted, and I can assure we have reviewed these. The 2011 *State of the Internet* report by Akamai does not include any data on London. However, it is apparent from the findings of that report that London does not appear in the top 100 global cities for the average connection speed, or in the top 10 European cities; the UK as a whole is ranked number 26 among nations.

We have also reviewed Cushman & Wakefield's 2011 *European Cities Monitor*, which as you state ranks London as the leading European city for its quality of telecommunications. This is important evidence. However, as it is based only on a survey among a group of business leaders, it has to be considered alongside those studies that have tested connection speeds directly.

On the specific issue of the delays some businesses have experienced in obtaining a broadband connection, you are right that the Committee has heard a variety of anecdotal evidence about this. However this evidence has come from a number of independent

sources, as well as Members' own experiences. Our press release is clear that this is information we heard at the meeting, not drawn from third party research. Furthermore, our press release included your own figure of seven days as the average time it takes BT to provide a broadband service.

Another important point to note is that there was consensus among most of the experts and stakeholders we invited to our hearing that London is behind its competitors in terms of its broadband provision. The Committee's press release reflects the research and this direct expert input. Clearly you have a contrasting view, but I think it demonstrates the openness of our approach that you were able to argue this at length during the hearing. Ultimately, Members have to make a judgement on the balance of the evidence received.

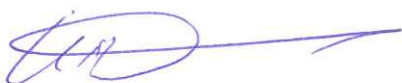
I have to disagree with your view that the Committee's press release is likely to be detrimental to London's economy. If there are problems affecting London's economic performance – and it is clear that broadband provision is one of them – then the best approach is to get these issues out into the open, focus attention on them and make sure policy-makers take the necessary steps to address them.

Finally, there were a couple of other questions raised during our meeting, where further information from BT would be helpful to our discussions. These are:

- While seven days is the average time it takes to install a new broadband connection, what is the shortest amount of time it could take to install a connection if any factors causing delays were addressed?
- What proportion of London residents are currently able to connect to an 80 megabit per second broadband service if they wished to?

Thank you again for your participation in the Committee's work. I hope that we can continue to have a constructive dialogue on this issue. I look forward to hearing from you again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Dismore', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Andrew Dismore AM**  
Chair of the Economy Committee