

## News from the Scottish Labour Party in the Highlands and Islands

16 June 2008

### **Broadband in the Western Isles**

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Highlands and Islands MSP Peter Peacock, commenting on the decision by HIE not to pursue procurement of BT broadband upgrade for Northbay, Barra in the Western Isles, said,

"I know that the people who have been campaigning for a BT ADSL service for Northbay will be unhappy with this decision from HIE.

"Following representations from people across the islands I have been seeking clarity from the Connected Communities partnership, through HIE, and BT on the issue of choice for the Western Isles and will continue to do so.

"Initial discussions with BT indicate that they have no plans to enable any more exchanges in the Western Isles before the roll out of the 21st century network programme in three years time and I am seeking clarification on that position.

If that is the case I will be seeking the best options possible for anyone using the Connected Communities service in the medium term and will be pushing for both a lowering of the cost and an increase in the connection speeds for users.

"HIE has said that one of the benefits of the Connected Communities roll out is that households will be connected sooner.

"Some of the Northbay residents are unconvinced and fear delays beyond the estimated end of August.

"There are also fears that there will be blind spots leaving some people in the community without the opportunity for broadband.

"I plan to discuss these issues further with HIE to ensure that residents in Northbay and across the Western Isles receive the best service possible."

Ends

web links :

**Peter Peacock** : [www.peterpeacock.org.uk](http://www.peterpeacock.org.uk)

**Rhoda Grant** : [www.rhodagrants.org.uk](http://www.rhodagrants.org.uk)

**David Stewart** : [www.davidstewart.org.uk](http://www.davidstewart.org.uk)

**Highlands and Islands Labour** : [www.handilabour.org.uk](http://www.handilabour.org.uk)