

*News from ...*



**Peter Peacock**  
**Scottish Labour Regional MSP for the Highlands and Islands**

29 May 2008

**MSP seeks answers on choice for broadband customers in Western Isles**

MSP Peter Peacock is seeking answers on questions of choice for residents on the Western Isles who want to use broadband.

The Highlands and Islands MSP has tabled a range of questions in the Scottish Parliament to try and ascertain the scope for securing more customer choice.

Currently in parts of the islands some can get a service from BT while others access broadband through the Connected Communities network.

A number of residents have been in touch with Mr Peacock raising concerns about getting access to broadband at all, or raising questions about the level of service they receive. One constituent in North Uist has set up a petition calling for broadband to be provided by BT.

Peter Peacock said:

"A number of constituents have contacted me raising issues about their choice of service providers and indicating some concerns with aspects of the communities' service.

"They believe they were promised a high performance wireless system to equal BT provision – but now are raising questions over reliability, cost and restricted use of Internet Service Providers,"

He added: "There are many others who can not yet access broadband and are finding it difficult to register with the Scottish Government because for improved broadband provision Connected Communities is the local provider.

"Local people want to know if there is any option to get a BT service too."

Residents at Northbay on Barra recently rejected the option of a service from Connected Communities and have asked HIE to investigate the possibility of a full ADSL service provided by BT. An update on that from HIE is imminent.

Peter Peacock concluded: "I am arranging meetings with Head of Scottish Affairs for BT and HIE's Head of Communications to establish exactly what the prospects are for more choice of providers in the islands.

"Broadband is a vitally important issue for business and residents on the Western Isles and I want to see progress.

" I have tabled a series of questions to Ministers and I will be pressing all the relevant agencies to see what further progress is possible and when."

**ends**

**Website link**

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

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