

BT and superfast Broadband – the race is on

✖ BT has called on Scottish communities to compete in a unique race for super-fast broadband.

Households and businesses will be able to demonstrate local demand for super-fast fibre broadband by taking part in a nationwide BT survey, run as a competition called the Race to Infinity. The winning areas will be upgraded by early 2012 at the latest, according to BT.

The race – which runs until December 31st 2010 at www.bt.com/racetoinfinity – will map demand for fibre broadband across the UK, helping BT identify “hot spots” where demand is high. The data will be used to influence the company’s future deployment plans.

BT has promised to upgrade the five UK exchanges with the highest demand by early 2012 at the latest. The company is also pledging to engage with any community not winning the competition where at least 75 per cent of homes and businesses have voted for super-fast broadband. All possibilities of bringing fibre broadband to the area will be explored.

BT will have made super-fast broadband available to four million premises by the end of 2010, but it will still have more than 12 million further premises to reach as part of its plan to deliver fibre broadband to two thirds of the UK by 2015. By taking part in the survey, communities will have the opportunity to make their voices heard as the company decides where else to deploy the technology.

Brendan Dick, BT Scotland director, said: “This is a golden opportunity for people in Scotland to demonstrate the level of demand for fibre broadband in their communities – and help us to take the nation’s broadband pulse.

“This data will help determine where fibre broadband will be deployed over the next few years, so it’s vital for both the communities involved and the country as a whole that residents take the time to complete the survey.”

Scottish Government Enterprise Minister Jim Mather said: “This is an excellent opportunity for householders and businesses to make the case for high-speed broadband in their community. I encourage all Scottish communities to take advantage of this campaign and register their demand with BT.

“The Scottish Government has carried out a significant amount of work to improve basic broadband services through telephone exchange upgrades and use of satellite technologies to connect properties out of reach, and this is an opportunity to build on that work.”

UK Communications Minister Ed Vaizey said: “Whenever I travel around the UK I hear the same message: people want access to superfast broadband in their communities. I warmly welcome any initiative that will lead to private sector investment in fibre networks, and applaud the way BT is engaging consumers to ensure that investment reaches the people who want it the most.”

Participants can vote for fibre broadband on the Race to Infinity website, which will show the number and percentage of votes received for each exchange. The site will display the top five exchanges leading the race as exchanges hit 1,000 votes.

The website also offers downloadable information packs, flyers and posters for people who want to become active super-fast broadband campaigners. The communities having the most success with campaigns could qualify for BT support with stickers, badges, a digital camera or money towards a local radio promotion.

The BT roll-out of super-fast broadband is one of the most

ambitious fibre programmes in the world not reliant on public sector support. But support will be needed for exchanges in the “final third” of the UK where deploying fibre is commercially non-viable.