

## Press Release



# Next Generation Broadband will be key to delivering Digital Britain

*Goal must be to set a clear strategic framework that encourages the sector to invest and enables the country as a whole to benefit*

The BSG welcomed the publication today of the Digital Britain interim report. Kip Meek, Chairman of the BSG said, “the Prime Minister made it very clear today that digital networks will be the driving force of the economy going forward. Next generation broadband is the biggest economic prize at stake in this report. The government has set out the key issues and is stepping up to the task of setting a clear strategic framework that encourages the sector to invest – and the country as a whole to benefit.”

The report recognises the central importance of broadband to the UK economy and sets out three key challenges: firstly, to agree a minimum level of service that should be universally available; secondly to further drive the levels of take up; and thirdly to ensure the timely and widespread deployment of next generation broadband networks.

- **Universal broadband:** Kip Meek proposed the idea of a universal broadband commitment in a speech November.<sup>1</sup> Broadband access is fast becoming an essential utility for families and business across the UK. The BSG welcomes the goal of setting a minimum level of broadband that should be available universally and will work with government to determine the scope of the universal service commitment and the potential mechanisms for funding it.
- **Driving take-up:** The BSG’s own research has highlighted the importance of achieving high levels of adoption to maximise the social and economic benefits of broadband.<sup>2</sup> Driving take-up significantly beyond current levels will require government engagement and effective collaboration across the sector. The BSG will support this process.
- **Next generation broadband:** Economic conditions have changed significantly since publication of the Caio report making next generation broadband both more important to the economy and harder to deliver for the industry. The next few weeks provide an

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.broadbanduk.org/content/view/350/7/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.broadbanduk.org/value>

opportunity for government to set out a vision for how, where and when next generation broadband can be delivered. The BSG welcomes the announcement of a strategic review and will directly engage in this process to ensure a clear vision is established and that specific measures are identified to achieve it.

The BSG also welcomes the emphasis placed in the report on ensuring that consumers are empowered to navigate the digital future effectively. The BSG believes that a coordinated approach is required to ensure that consumers have trust and confidence in digital services and are comfortable with the rapid innovation taking place across the sector. Proposed measures to improve levels of media literacy, and empower consumers to make informed choices through the provision of transparent information about the nature of content and the use of personal data are positive steps to achieve this important outcome.

ENDS

#### **Notes to Editors**

##### **About the Broadband Stakeholder Group**

The BSG was established as a cross-sector government advisory group in 2001 to help the UK lead the G7 in broadband penetration and connectivity. It provides a neutral forum for collaboration between organisations across the converging broadband value-chain with the ultimate aim of helping to create a strong and competitive UK knowledge economy

It aims to be a critical friend of government and the regulator, and comprises companies from the telecoms and technology sectors through to content providers and rights holders. It also has direct representation from government departments and Ofcom. It is funded through a combination of government funding and industry sponsorship.

The BSG focuses on strategic, medium- to long-term challenges, which have latterly included next generation access networks, predicting future bandwidth requirements, digital inclusion and self- and co-regulation in the audiovisual media market.

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