

WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM COLIN PIKE

I have lived in Maryculter at Burnside Farm, AB12 5GX, for over 25 years and have used dial up and broadband network connections since the early 90's. These connections have included, copper wire across the public telephone network, satellite based and cellular wireless. During this time I have paid for both business and domestic connections simultaneously within my house and business premises at the same address. By choice I would use the copper wire connection as this is the most practical in terms of ongoing costs and equipment functionality, however it is not without its major failings.

The experiences range from a very intermittent or non-functioning service to inadequate in everyday usage. The most exasperating experience is, having to contact British Telecom or BT Wholesale when there is a problem. These organisations are very difficult to penetrate to explain any problem or get satisfactory answers from. I have resorted to writing to the Chief Executive and summoning them to Court through the small claims service for failure to provide the level of service they are charging for. Over the years I have had many visits from their respective engineers to investigate ongoing problems on the line. Each engineer has detected high noise levels and associated interference blaming the inadequacy of the cable infrastructure and distance from the Peterculter exchange. It should be a prime objective that these organisations adhere to a customer charter where service is a priority. Resorting to telephone these organisations and listening to a message telling you that you can obtain a quicker response by accessing them online, is not amusing when you don't have that online connection because it has failed.

As more and more services are becoming only online accessible it is imperative to have a high speed reliable service. Typical examples of everyday business activities which now must be done online, as there is no longer paper filing or telephone access are HMRC VAT filing, PAYE records, farm records, grant and application forms, banking, H&SE reporting and enquiries. Perhaps like many others, I now find my business day and home activities usually commence and end with access to the internet. As internet usage grows and more organisations adopt this as a medium they choose over any other communication method it is absolutely essential to have a wholly reliable and efficient service.

I regularly monitor my connection at various times throughout the day as detailed here

Location	Date	Time	Test Provider	WiFi	Router	Service Provider	Service Type	Download Mb	Upload Mb
AB12 5GX	25.08.11	1115	Uswitch	Yes	BT Home Hub	BT	Home	0.4	0.3
AB12 5GX	25.08.11	1120	Uswitch	Yes	Thomson	PlusNet	Business	1.2	0.3
AB12 5GX	26.08.11	2135	Uswitch	Yes	Thomson	PlusNet	Business	1.2	0.3
AB12 5GX	01.09.11	1615	Uswitch	Yes	Thomson	PlusNet	Business	1.4	0.2
AB12 5GX	05.09.11	1225	Uswitch	Yes	Thomson	PlusNet	Business	1.4	0.3
AB12 5GX	07.09.11	2035	Uswitch	Fixed	Thomson	PlusNet	Business	1.4	0.3
AB12 5GX	08.11.11	2135	Uswitch	Fixed	Thomson	PlusNet	Business	1.1	0.1

I am firmly of the opinion that more effort should be directed at solving rural access and reliability problems such that everyone has a basic level of service satisfactory to perform everyday online tasks. The urge to provide inner city high speed connections is misguided. Most city based residents and businesses already have a level of service that outperforms their actual requirements.