

Chancellor's broadband investment will do nothing for rural communities

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Wales-based rural broadband provider [eXwavia](#) says £150million broadband commitment is not good news for rural Britain.

Rural Britain has been left in the cyber slow lane after Chancellor George Osborne announced a £150 million package for super fast broadband for cities and smaller cities, according to Annette Burgess, Managing Director of Mid Wales-based rural broadband provider eXwavia.

The Chancellor announced in his budget that £100 million will go to support broadband infrastructure capable of providing high speed broadband connections in 10 UK cities and a further £50 million for smaller cities as part of the National Infrastructure Plan.

But there is no extra cash to get rural Britain on the super-fast highway, leaving businesses and communities to face an uncertain and unfair future that could affect jobs and future commercial investment.

£100 million has been announced for larger cities including Cardiff, Belfast, Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle and London. The additional £50 million will be made available to smaller cities that bid for it.

Today's announcement is good news - if you live in one of the 10 cities named and, potentially in a smaller city. But the majority of the UK, which is made up of rural communities, will suffer as a result. Without significant investment in the rural broadband infrastructure there is a risk to jobs and investment as well as social issues, said Annette, who heads up eXwavia, a specialist wireless broadband company based near Welshpool, Powys, and providing wireless broadband in rural Wales.

"The message that rural communities are hearing from the government is that they are not important. We are creating a green waste land rather than a vibrant, viable rural economy. Sure, delivering rural broadband to some of these areas is challenging, but not impossible. eXwavia is delivering next generation broadband right now and the difference it can make to individuals, communities and rural businesses is quite frankly breathtaking.

Annette added that the extension to the Welsh Government's Broadband Support Scheme in Wales was to be welcomed. But more needs to be done to ensure rural areas throughout the UK are not left lagging behind or else we face a country with a social and business divide as a result of lack of broadband capability. That is not good for the communities or the economy as a whole.

eXwavia has developed a wireless broadband network on Anglesey in North Wales that provides super fast and dependable broadband to businesses and individuals who can choose a speed they want from 4Mbps to 60Mbps.

The company is rolling the service out to other parts of rural Wales, including north Powys where it has just switched on a network for more than 80 customers in an area that cannot get reliable wire-based broadband and satellite technology is too expensive.

Annette added: We're talking to officials and politicians at the Welsh Government and Westminster about the broadband divide and what needs to be done. We hope more investment will be forthcoming to ensure rural Britain isn't left behind and to secure jobs and social well-being for the future.

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For more media information, please contact:
Owain Betts, t: 01686 688008 / 07787 437052
e: Owain.Betts@ombpr.com
www.exwavia.co.uk

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Company Contact:

OMB Communications

T. 01686688008

E. Owain.Betts@ombpr.com

W. <http://www.ombcommunications.co.uk>

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