



£BILLIONS WORTH OF PIE IN THE SKY

- The R100 and UK Gigabit Programme will not deliver for all non-connected areas in rural and island Scotland.
- Of those premises and businesses that will get connected, several thousand will wait to do so till 2026.
- Many of those already-serviced by FTTC have connectivity below 10Mbps and limited 4G. They are digitally excluded.
- Current infrastructure is not future-proofed. As we move towards a gigabit economy, more people will experience digital exclusion bearing in mind FTTP also supports 5G.
- The voucher schemes are not working for 'very hard to reach' communities
- Communities and individual consumers require different support packages – advice, financial assistance, skilling up – which are not integrated with current digital inclusion programmes.

CONSTRAINTS

Infrastructure is consumer-driven rather than place-driven; pick & mix policy targets; siloed planning that separates different technology and infrastructure and also separates tech from connectivity and access



Accurate information to enable planning

Connectivity questions included in 2022 Census

Access fund for rural community connectivity experts to survey very hard to reach areas.
Community toolkit produced to support process.

Government consultations on digital strategies to be outsourced to funders.



Integrated strategy - 4G/5G coverage

Digital Strategy to integrate investment plan in target 100% 4G/5G coverage building on Emergency Services Network.

Ofcom to undertake macro level roaming feasibility study in very hard to reach communities.



Integrated strategy – connectivity & access

Digital Strategy to integrate investment plan in rural community & consumer connectivity experts - community broadband suppliers, tech repair and digital champions initiatives.

Inclusive Connectivity Implementation Group established under Digital Strategy.



Grass-roots innovations

National directory and incubator of rural digital innovation.

Digital democracy pilot in rural and island local authorities to feed into governance review process.

Upgrade programme of digital community hubs supported by network of village halls.