MIDLANDS ENGINE DIGITAL
Update - January 2022

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Our Midlands Engine Digital Steering Group continues work at pace since our last update - and work on the three themes for this workstream continue to accelerate, including:

Midlands Digital Conference - Connecting ideas, delivering innovation, in partnership with HSBC UK

Preparations are now well advanced for the Midlands Engine Digital Conference on 18 January 2022.

Invitations have been sent to our key stakeholders including local authority partners, Midlands Engine LEPs, universities and businesses, via the Midlands Engine Business Forum. Our APPG Digital members and wider Midlands Engine APPG members will additionally receive a post conference video summary, and hear first-hand from regional digital champions, with presentations on best practice implementation of digital connectivity from organisations in the public and private sectors.

With later sessions focused on innovation and the latest digital developments, the afternoon comprises a choice of nine workshops. Partners are investing heavily to make sure the event is a success, contributing time and staff to organising the conference, including Nottingham City Council and Loughborough University among others. Our virtual event will go ahead with the support and partnership of HSBC UK.

Discontinuous Innovation Midlands Engine (DIME)

After work to reveal the potential in the Midlands Engine presented by early adoption and deployment at scale of the latest technology opportunities, further work to develop DIME 2 with a clear focus on the Midlands has been completed.

This work has been made possible thanks to the co-investment of teams from Coventry and Loughborough universities.

Key concepts and ideas will be taken forward by the Midlands Engine Observatory Research partnership, and publication of this next important paper is expected in late spring 2022.

Midlands Engine Digital Connected Map

Our regional connected map, highlighting connectivity hot-spots and not-spots – and more, has been put into application by regional partners, with 9 licences now issued. Iterative use and feedback from partners is helping to continue shaping the use and content of the map, as we gather critical feedback on user experience, guiding future developments.

Access to the map has been offered to all Midlands Engine partners and this work is being coordinated by the digital project coordinator from WM5G, with work and staff posts funded by Midlands Engine. Our Midlands Digital Conference will highlight the opportunities presented by the map to new users and increase its deployment by partners.

Forward look

Work to develop the draft Midlands Engine Digital Action Plan will be completed during February and March, following engagement with stakeholders and a period of consultation on a draft document. Publication is expected in late March or April. Our regional Gigahubs work will advance towards a formal assurance gateway, as we prepare to mobilise proactive soft market engagement ahead of programme commissioning to deliver accelerated connections.

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