MIDLANDS ENGINE DIGITAL
Update - June 2022

Midlands Engine Digital Connected Map

To make sure that all partners are aware of and benefitting from this important resource, all tier 1 local authorities have been approached regarding access and usage. Responses have been positive, and additional licences have been purchased to meet the increased demand.

The scale and power of the map is now showcased in a video that demonstrates its huge potential To view **'Click here'**.

Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA)

The DCIA Pilot programme is being managed by WM5G on behalf of the WMCA. They are working with cross-regional partners to ensure that the lessons learned from this crucial piece of work are shared with partners as it progresses over the course of the year.

Potential outputs include:

- Testing the process required to digitise elements of the site acquisition process.
- Building evidence of whether the use of a digital asset management platform enables more efficient industry access to public sector assets.
- Assessing the potential commercial models and economic viability of running a digital asset management platform.
- Increasing expertise and reach an understanding of what resource is required to expedite telecommunications infrastructure deployment.
- Demonstrating the application of a digital asset management mapping platform across a diverse range of geographies and socio-economic profiles.
- Demonstrating that the platform has been tested with multiple asset types.

GigaHubs

GigaHubs will use up to £110 million to connect public buildings, such as rural schools, doctors' surgeries and libraries, to gigabit broadband. This will help GPs provide remote video consultations and allow whole classes of schoolchildren to be online, at once, with no interruptions.

We are continueing to explore and develop a possible regional approach to GigaHubs that will accelerate delivery and reduce the administrative burden to local areas. To date eight local authorities have confirmed that they are interested in moving forward with a collaborative pan-regional model.

Unfortunately, BDUK has advised that there are no additional external funds to provide management resources to the programme. As a result, we are continuing to review potential costs and timings to see if this new model is feasible.

Midlands Engine Digital Action Plan

The outline and format of the Midlands Engine Digital Action Plan has been shared with partners from both the Midlands Digital Strategy Board and Steering Group at joint meetings since the New Year.

Partners have made suggestions as to what themes are the most important to the pan-region and which can be measured using a series of metrics proposed in partnership with our Observatory.

Volunteers are also being sought to lead on and/or be involved in developing the different themes, which include:

- Digital Connectivity
- Digital Skills
- Digital Adoption – particularly by SMEs

A final draft of the Plan will be discussed and agreed by members of the Board and Group on 19 July, with the final version due to approved by the Digital Board on 28 July.