MIDLANDS ENGINE DIGITAL

Update - July to August 2022

MIDLANDS ENGINE

GigaHubs

The GigaHubs Programme in the Midlands Engine region will spend up to £8 million to connect public buildings such as rural schools and doctors' surgeries and provide gigabit broadband across approximately 346 sites. This will help GPs provide remote video consultations and allow whole classes of schoolchildren to be online, at once, with no interruptions.

ME has developed a regional approach to GigaHubs that will accelerate delivery and reduce the administrative burden to local areas.

To date nine Local Authorities have confirmed that they are interested in moving forward with a collaborative pan-regional model. This will be led by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Unfortunately, BDUK has advised that there are no additional external funds to provide management resources to the programme. As a result the ME Operating Board has been approached to approve a contribution of up to £300k over the next 3-years to enable this programme to run over the Midlands region from 01 April 2023.

Midlands Engine Digital Action Plan

The outline Midlands Engine Digital Action Plan has been shared with partners from both the Midlands Digital Strategy Board and Steering Group at a joint workshop meeting on 01 September at the WM5G offices in Coventry.
Partners considered 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 the MEO.
Volunteers were also 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 version of the Plan will be produced by 30 September and discussed further at a combined Strategy Board and Steering Group on 24 November. This will then feed into the ME Business Plan for 2023/24.

Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA)

The DCIA Pilot programme is being managed by WM5G on behalf of the WMCA.

The eight DCIA pilots are currently collecting, cleansing and uploading data into five different 'commercial' platforms. The idea of the pilot is to see if it is possible to prove a sustainable commercial platform, that can help both Operators and Local Authorities deliver mobile infrastructure more quickly and at lower cost.

Midlands Digital Connectivity Map

Whilst 14 licences have been issued to partners to access the Map usage remains low and below that envisaged when the Map was initially developed.

As a result the decision has been taken to delay any major data updates until the outcome of the DCIA project are known and the future direction of travel on digital mapping tools is clearer.

The scale and power of the current map can be seen by accessing a video that demonstrates the map. This can be accessed via this link **'Click here'.**

midlandsengine.org