

Gigafast Staffordshire - Connecting our rural communities

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Introduction from Councillor Philip Atkins



Digital Infrastructure is an enabler

Digital Infrastructure is intrinsically linked to Staffordshire County Council's strategic goals, supporting and enabling the below outcomes:

- Economic growth
- Making Staffordshire an attractive County to invest, live, work and play
- Transformation of the Digital Economy
- Delivery of digital public services
- Education improvements
- Healthy independent living
- Supported families and communities
- Supporting Climate Change initiatives
- Increased digital inclusion



Digital Infrastructure

“Staffordshire will be a county with access to 100% gigabit connectivity by 2030”

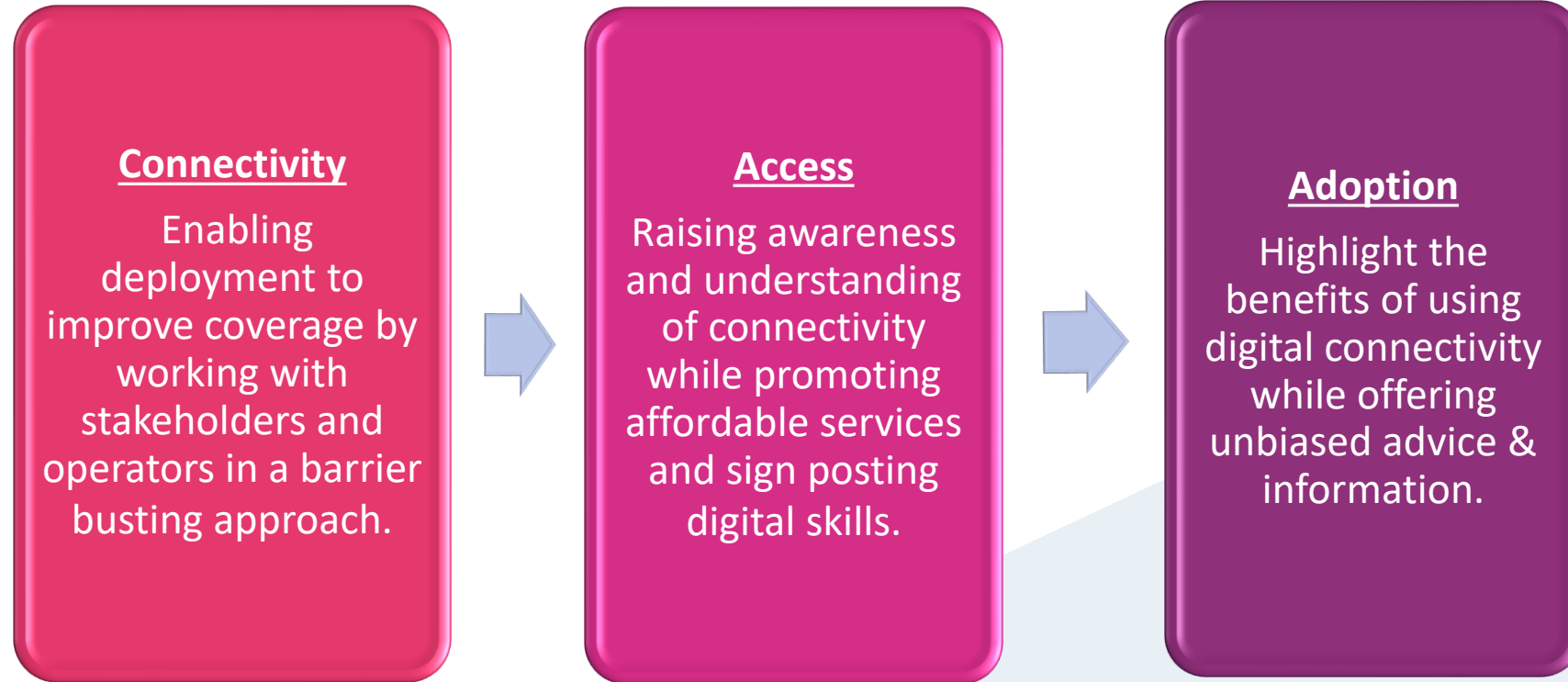
Progress:

1. Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework has been approved by Cabinet – June 2022.
 - 5-year programme funded through forecasted gainshare from Superfast Programme

2. Programmes key objectives
 - i. Enable and accelerate delivery of gigabit capable technologies and infrastructure to provide full access
 - ii. Maximise the opportunities and benefits of 5G across Staffordshire
 - iii. Enable rural and digitally isolated communities where market intervention has failed
 - iv. Enable the growth of the digital economy in Staffordshire
 - v. Demonstrate the benefits of gigabit technology to businesses and communities



Programme Structure



Known Barriers & Challenges

Barriers to coverage and deployment:

- Lack of commercial interest in VHTR areas
- Lack of confidence in Project Gigabit Procurement & data quality
- Overbuild issues – highways, complaints, travel interruptions, cost etc.
- Complex Government projects
- Funding
- Senior buy in from leaders and cabinet
- Uncoordinated approach – internal and external

Barriers to access and adoption:

- Lack of knowledge on benefits
- Lack of awareness/ terminology - what 'fibre' means
- Affordability of tariffs and technologies
- Lack of digital skills
- Lack of infrastructure
- Online safety/Security risks
- Insight and research into exclusion cohorts (homeless, culture, age, deprivation etc)
- Funding
- Senior buy in from leaders and cabinet
- Uncoordinated approach – internal and external



Access & Adoption Activity

Task	Desired outcome
Analysis of data from insight team to gain better understanding of excluded communities to focus on excluded cohorts.	Identify main cohorts that are currently excluded and provide focus on next phase of the delivery plan
Reviewing recommended 'digital inclusion approach' & adapting to suit Staffordshire as a rural setting.	Adapt to suit rural setting & create bespoke plan to fit Staffordshire's ambitions
Supporting Staffordshire NHS Digital on a range of digital inclusion campaigns and projects	Increase the adoption of connectivity in order to improve quality of life and reduce hospital admissions
GIS activity to layer: digital exclusion, broadband coverage, mobile coverage and mosaic data sets	Help identify why individuals may be digital excluded (coverage, cost, knowledge etc)
Further resources (toolkit) are being added to the website to tackle digital exclusion	Raising awareness and understanding of connectivity while promoting affordable services and sign posting digital skills and offer unbiased advice & information
Full Fibre Friday social media campaign relaunched	Promote success and increase engagement with alt nets build positive relationships. While increasing residents knowledge re what providers/ solutions are available in there area
NHS Digital 'People's panel' 1540 members – to be used for insight & research studies	Access to a wide group of people with varied demographic's to obtain reliable research/insight
Digital skills quiz (4x versions for various settings) have been designed and awaiting sign off from key stakeholders before go live.	Increase digital inclusion by tackling the known barrier of lack of digital skills . Also increase number of people with employable skills = Drive economy
Working with Digital Poverty Alliance on utilising their 'toolkit'	Offer expert advice to help support our residents

Project Gigabit vs Current coverage

“100% gigabit connectivity by 2030”

Project Gigabit:

Local or regional procurement	Area and Lot number	Procurement start date	Estimated contract award date (subject to change)	Estimated number of premises outside supplier plans (subject to change)	Indicative contract value (£ million) (subject to change)
Procurement type TBC	Staffordshire (Lot 19)*	TBC	TBC	<u>70, 800</u>	£72 to 123 million

Staffordshire Current Coverage:

Superfast (>24 Mbps)	97.23%
Gigabit capable	67.42%
Full Fibre (FTTP or FTTH)	39.99%



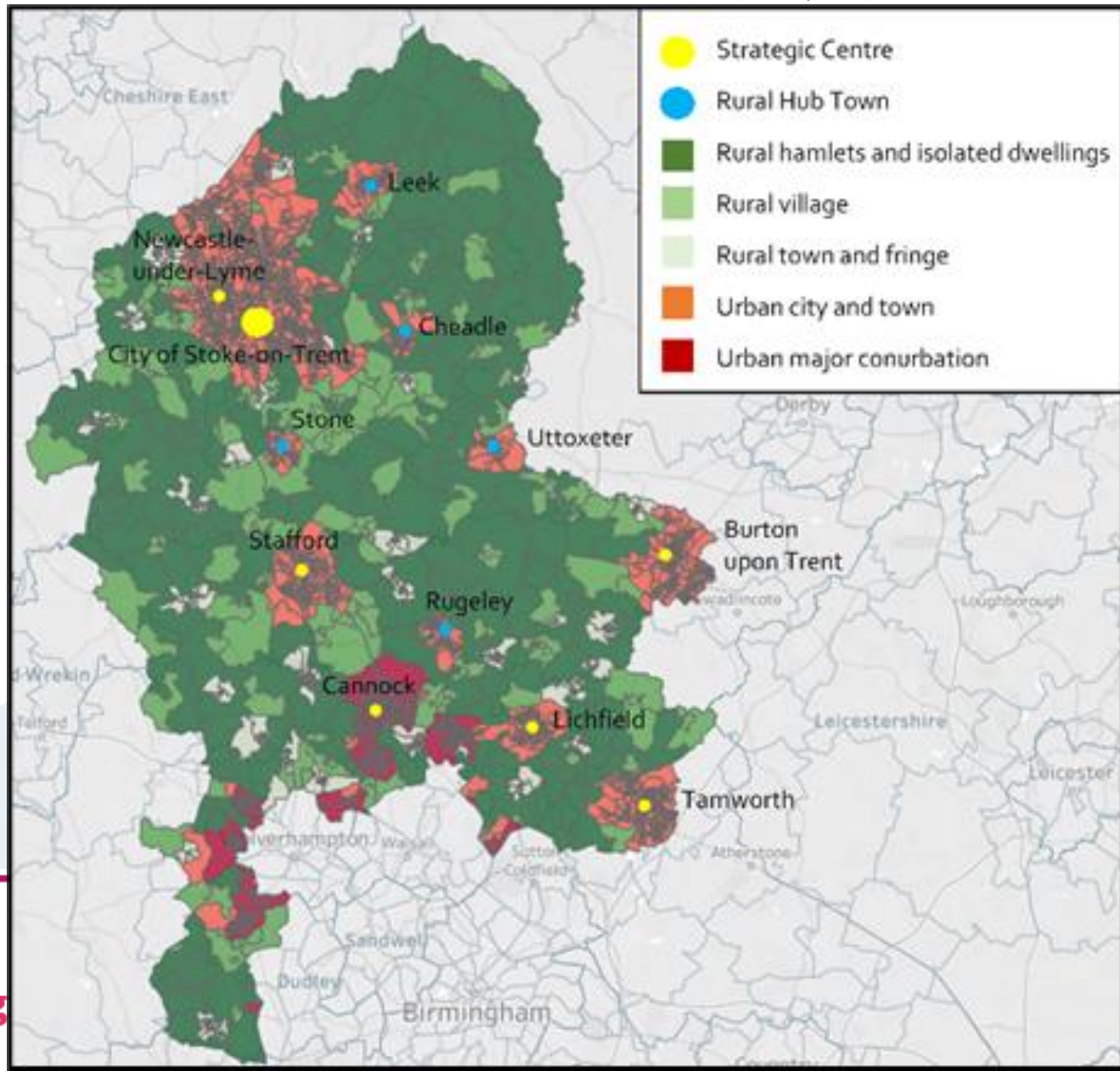
Understanding the problem

Rural areas, largely due to their low population density, often fall towards the end of, or do not fall within, commercial infrastructure deployments.

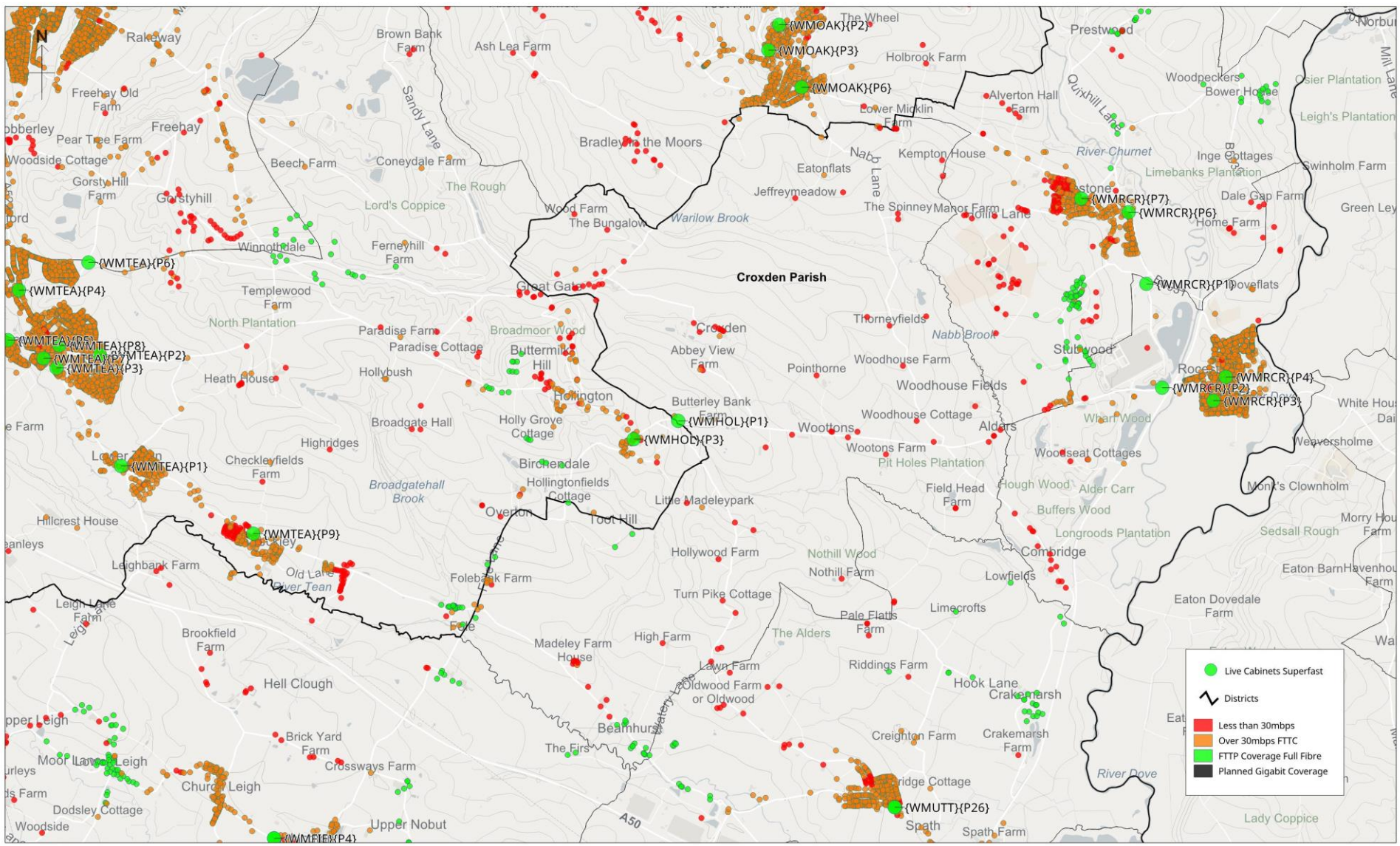
This is understandable but not acceptable, particularly to those living or working in these communities.

Staffordshire

80% of land mass is RURAL (county area)



Complexity of deploying in rural locations



Rural communities are unattractive to commercial operators, meaning they are unlikely to be addressed without local authority and government intervention.

Digital Infrastructure - Utilising Public Sector Assets

Enabling the deployment and delivery of Digital Infrastructure, addressing the coverage and capacity.

PSN:

The PSN is a large Public Services Network managed by SCC ICT. As well as delivering the network connectivity we are interested in understanding if additional soft benefits may be gained. A number of other local authorities have used its contract size and network reach (Local Gov, Health, Fire, Police, Education) to deliver additional :

- a. shared software services (e.g HR, Care, payroll etc)
- b. social value such as connectivity into very hard to reach areas
- c. social tariffs for multiple dwelling units (where appropriate)
- d. R&D contribution to new types of digital services

Public Wi-Fi:

SCC have been supporting Newcastle Town Council in deploying Public Wi-Fi, in a way that will allow us to utilise the data to explore the benefits of public Wi-Fi within the county and understand the social and economic impact.

Street Furniture:

Staffordshire county council are working with DCMS and neutral host providers to sign an open access agreement to deployment wireless infrastructure on public sector assets such as bus shelters, street lighting, road sign etc. with the ambition of deploying this in rural and urban environments.



Mobile Connectivity activity

DCIA:

SCC are now represented in the DCMS - Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA) Early Adopters Group (EAG). A network of LA's that have digital strategies in place and want to learn from the DCIA. Engage with other LA, government stakeholders, MNO's, platform providers.

5G Small Cell deployment:

We are working with DCMS and neutral host providers to sign an open access agreement to deployment wireless infrastructure on public sector assets such as bus shelters, street lighting, road sign etc.

Best Practice:

Commencing development of best practice approach for 5G deployment, utilising DCIA Early Adopters Group and other mobile networks offering lessons learnt /best practice to suit a rural environment.

Sub-regional Market Engagement :

Staffordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire LA's are working together to engage with MNO, neutral host providers and other industry bodies to share our strategic ambitions and collaborate how we can work together on driving digital connectivity. Evidence of current coverage is required to do this.



Demonstrate the benefits of gigabit technology to businesses and communities

We are here to:

- Assist in the delivery of Digital Infrastructure, to address the coverage in our rural areas.
- Raise awareness and understanding of Connectivity and technologies available to you now and in the future.
- Highlight the benefits of using digital connectivity.
- Offer unbiased advice and direct you to useful resources
- Help tackle digital inclusion
- Sign post digital skills courses

Public Engagement – www.gigafaststaffordshire.gov.uk



Q & A

