



Association of Directors of  
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

## ADEPT President's Awards 2022

### Entry form

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| <b>Award category:</b>   | Digital Innovation/Technology  |
| <b>Title:</b>  | Stansted Park Gigabit Voucher Project  |
| <b>Entrant:</b>  | West Sussex County Council   |
| <b>Main contact name:</b>  | Gregory Merrett<br>Jo Furber   |
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| <b>Partner/s (if applicable):</b>  | Stansted House Estate, Stansted Park Foundation, Easy Networks, Department for Digital Culture Media and Sports (DCMS)   |
| <b>Headline summary (150 characters, c. 20-25 words)</b><br><br>The historic Stansted Park and House has been digitally transformed for the future by the provision of the fastest and most reliable gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure. |  |

Please note we need **at least one supporting image** per award submission.  
Supporting images should be attached separately as jpg or png files.

Please paste links to any supporting video evidence here

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Link 1 | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KFw87beBh8&amp;t=151s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KFw87beBh8&amp;t=151s</a> |
| Link 2 |   |



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### **500-word project outline**

Stansted House and Stansted Park are Grade II listed landmarks in West Sussex. 1,800 acres of managed woodland and rolling open land is home to grazing deer and the many tenants of the estate's period properties.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought into sharp focus the negative effects of a lack of reliable digital infrastructure. Stansted Park's community did not have access to fast and reliable broadband meaning that residents and businesses within in could not fully participate within an increasingly digitised society as people lived, worked, schooled and ran businesses from home.

Commercial investment in the provision of broadband services was not viable, given the rural nature of the park and its expanse. The estates' owners, Stansted Park Foundation, turned to West Sussex County Council's innovative 'top up' broadband voucher fund for help. The council has trailblazed a £5.85m initiative to boost the delivery of the government's national gigabit voucher scheme by increasing the value of vouchers for eligible residents and businesses. By boldly offering a voucher value of up to £4,000 per qualifying premise West Sussex County Council is well placed to support rural communities seeking the benefits of digital infrastructure and to help the county recover economically from the global pandemic.

Working with the Foundation the council's Digital Infrastructure Team was able to generate enough interest across the park to apply for and pool the 'top up' vouchers and attract the support of local broadband provider, Easy Networks, to build gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure.

The resulting fibre technology is future-proofed and expected to serve the park's community for at least a generation. The download speeds now available to the residents, businesses and visitors of Stansted Park Estate are faster than in many towns and cities in the UK.

There are a diverse range of 12 businesses and 26 residential premises within the estate including the impressive Edwardian stately home, Stansted House, built in 1686 and itself partly converted to offer executive business offices and suites including in neighbouring buildings such as the Coach House. The attractiveness of the location to businesses has greatly increased given the new availability of gigabit-capable broadband.

One of the park's resident business owners commented: "Prior to the voucher project the 3G service on my phone was quicker than the broadband service I could receive at home. It's amazing that I can now get Wifi in my field stood next to my horse! I'm outside in the field most of the day but I can still email my customers, I can take orders, I can take photos and stream to my website. It has made my life so much easier now."

Stansted House, itself a tourist attraction, is now enhanced by opportunities to digitise the 'visitor experience' across its sights which include the house and gardens, garden centre and tearooms, farm shop, bookshop, light railway and arboretum. Estate-wide Wifi will also encourage people to share their visitor experience online using social media platforms to attract interest from others.

Stansted Park has been truly digitally transformed. (499 words)



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