

Digital Connectivity Working Group Update

Author: Ceren Clulow

Date: September 2023

Since the last update, the ADEPT Digital Connectivity Working Group has met once virtually in June. We had representatives from 13 local authorities across the country, also colleagues from LGA and Mobile UK.

Leading up to the second National Infrastructure Assessment in Autumn, the National Infrastructure Commission attended the working group to share and test their recommendations to take the appropriate approach, and to address any potential concerns. The Assessment is the Commission's flagship report that sets out the strategic priorities to national policy makers for infrastructure over the next generation. Following the previous National Infrastructure Assessment, published in 2018 around 80% of recommendations were accepted by government.

One of the projects they needed us to feed into the second Assessment relates to asset management. They have sent a survey to the telecoms providers and also wanted to talk to local government practitioners to understand our experience and our views on how to handle the telecoms asset management challenge. And the group had a really deep discussion and exchanged experiences.

At the working group meeting, we also had Freshwave sharing Alternative Wireless Solutions (such as indoor and outdoor small cells, distributed antenna system to enhance the existing wireless communication etc.) The main discussion topic was how mobile private network going to transform the public sector and why LAs should support it. The headlines were :

- Enhanced connectivity
- Efficiency and productivity
- Privacy and security
- Smart city initiatives
- Improved public safety

And finally, as a standing item on the agenda, we received a presentation from Mobile UK about their Live Better Connected Campaign. This is a quick awareness survey about finding out what type of mobile users we are and explores the daily usage of IoT (Internet of Things) devices to uncover how reliant we are on mobile connectivity. [Find out how connected you are. \(outgrow.us\)](https://www.outgrow.us)

In September, we will have the 3rd working group of the year where we will have West Sussex will share their 4G Mobile Broadband Voucher Scheme details. Also Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) has recently launched Innovation Prospectus to promote 5G adoption and utilising existing 5G testbeds for feasibility studies. We will hear further about this initiative.

-ENDS-