

Digital Wolverhampton Strategy Update

2 February 2023



Importance of digital to Wolverhampton

- Futureproofed digital infrastructure is the backbone of a modern thriving economy driving productivity and spreading growth.
- It is the building block to maximise the benefits for the city, critical to levelling up our economy and powering recovery and increasingly important with Covid accelerating the adoption of digital.
- Our starting point was despite good coverage of superfast and ultrafast broadband, there were key gaps in coverage especially the city centre and less full fibre than many rural areas with no commercial plans to upgrade.
- Wolverhampton adopted its Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy January 2020 identifying a Digital Champion, Coordinator and Councillor Digital Innovation Champion.
- Driven by digital is a cross cutting theme of Our City: Our Plan.



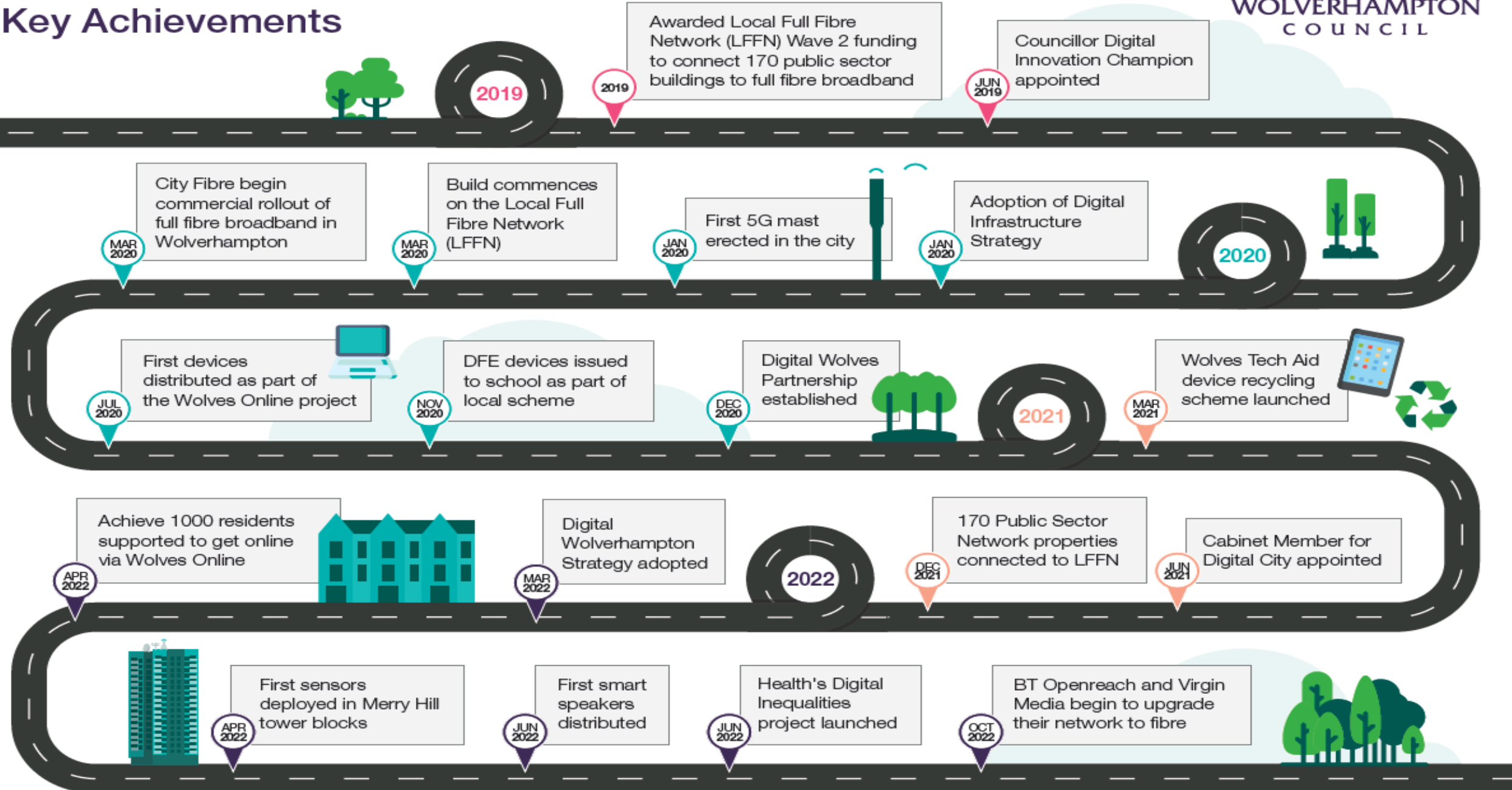
Wolverhampton Digital Strategy

- **Revised Digital Strategy** approved 23 March 2022 building on progress made on digital infrastructure with ambitions:
 - **Wolverhampton is a Gigabit and Smart City** using futureproofed digital infrastructure, including full fibre broadband & 5G, to transform delivery of services & develop new applications to unlock the city's potential.
 - **100% digitally included Wolverhampton** ensuring all residents have the access to devices, connectivity and skills to take advantage of what the digital platform has to offer.
 - **Growing the digital economy and talent pipeline** building on the city's futureproofed infrastructure to start and grow businesses, creating jobs for residents and meeting skills needs for the future.



Digital Wolverhampton Programme

Key Achievements



Digital Infrastructure

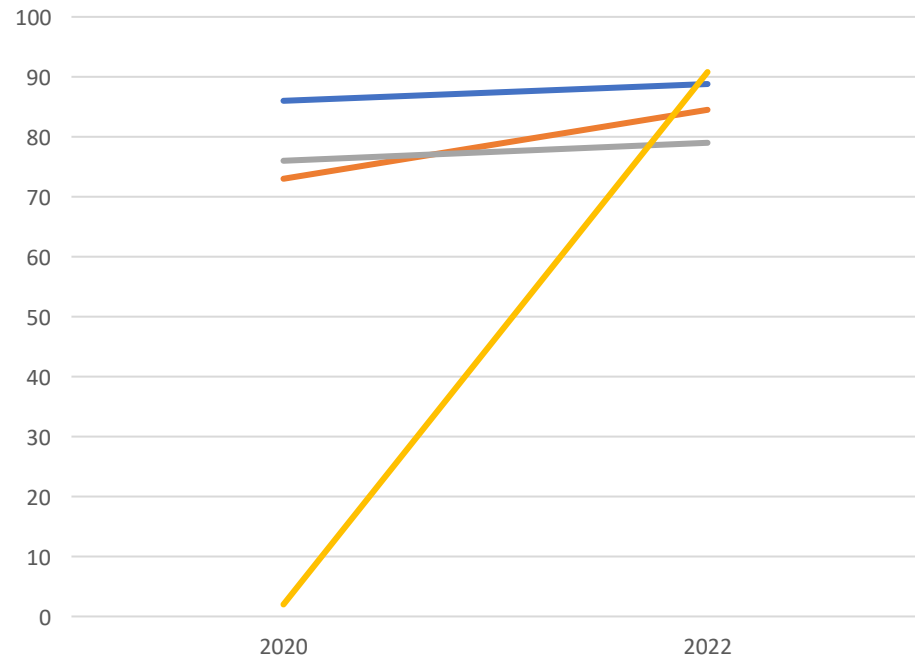
Digital Infrastructure - Progress

- Wolverhampton secured £4.9m Local Full Fibre network funding connecting 170 public sector buildings to full fibre acting as a catalyst for commercial rollout.
- Wolverhampton's gigabit coverage increased from 2% in September 2020 to 90.8% December 2022 (Connected Nations 2022).
- Only 1% of properties had full fibre connectivity in 2020 increasing to 37.8% of properties December 2022 (Connected Nations 2022).
- In addition to CityFibre roll out in the city, Openreach and Virgin Media are also upgrading their infrastructure to full fibre starting Autumn 2022.
- All Mobile Network Operators have announced rollout of 5G in the City accelerated by over 6 months due to a proactive approach (WM5G).
- 9 small cells rolled out in the city, 2 live.

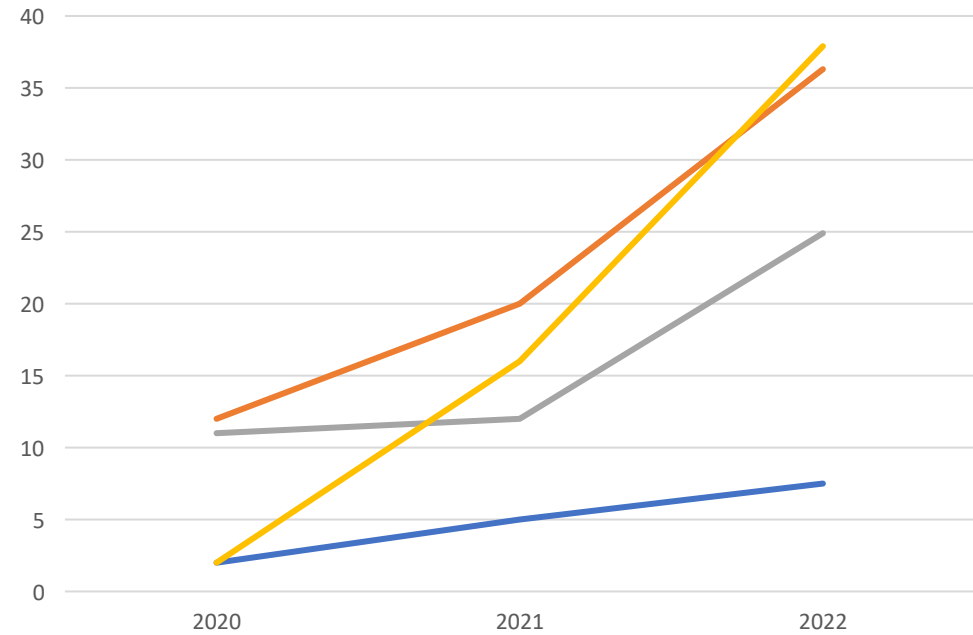


Digital Infrastructure - Progress

Gigabit Growth



Full Fibre growth

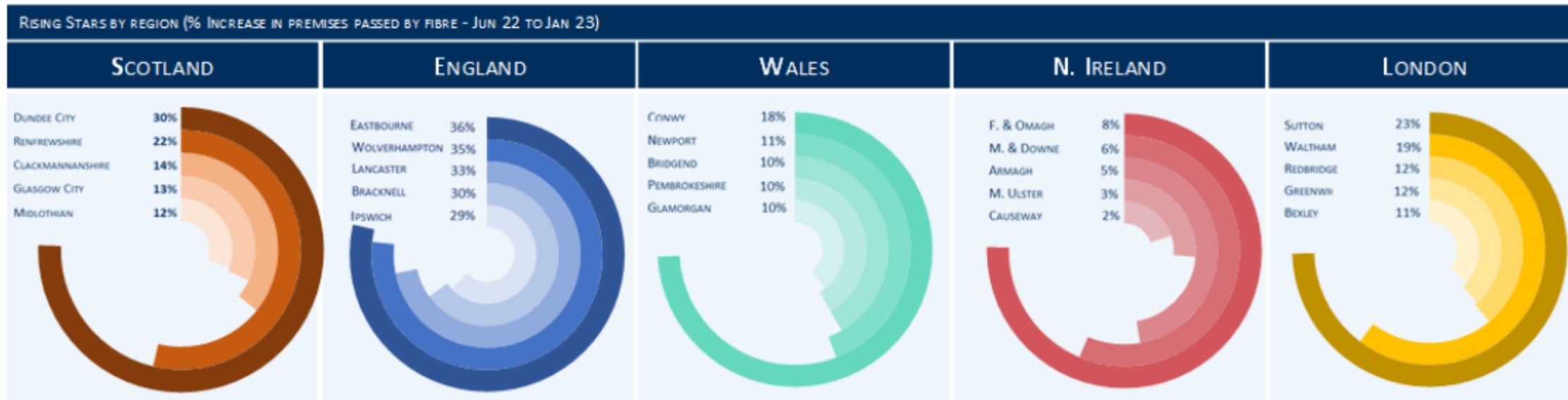


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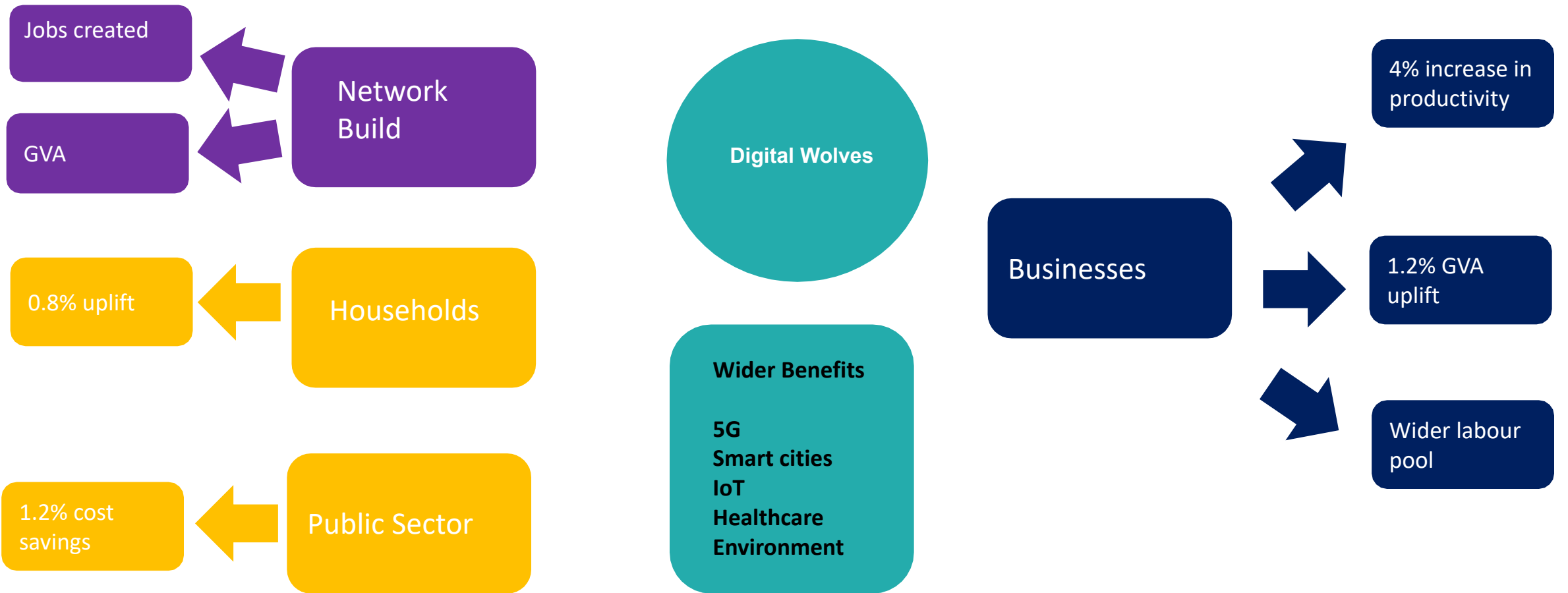
Digital Infrastructure - Progress



2023 State of Fibre Infographic. Source: Intelligens Consulting, Think Broadband, January 2023



Benefits of Digital Infrastructure



Digital Inclusion

Digital Inclusion Progress

- Wolves Online, our device and connectivity lending scheme has lent out 1169 devices and 9200 gigabit data (368,000 hours of online browsing), supporting 2140 residents to improve digital skills through our network of 51 trusted partners.
- Wolves Tech Aid www.wolvestechaid.com, our local device recycling scheme, has recycled 325 devices and distributed to children via 7 schools. An additional 56 devices are awaiting recycling and 83 ready for distribution with periphery's. Campaigns to encourage further donations aimed at residents in January and businesses in March.
- BC Connected for a Healthier Future have distributed 462 devices across the Black Country to date.



Digital Inclusion Progress - Sam

“Everything is online nowadays and with no IT background, I am being left behind”

Sam was loaned a device and given access to 31 free online courses such as Job Hunting Online, Jobs and Interviews and National Careers Service website. After completing the courses, he has been gifted a tablet and data.

“The course helped me a lot, the device that was loaned to me made a huge difference in my life.”



Digital Inclusion Progress - Elvira

Elvira's aim was to improve her Media Skills and progressing to 6th Form to take her A levels /BTEC qualification.

Elvira was loaned a device and volunteered for the "Safer Communities through Digital Technology" project that recruits young people aged 16-24 to be part of a video/film production team to produce a vlog on how to make the community safer by recommending crime prevention strategies.

"I have learnt lots of ways to keep safe that I can share with my peers"



Digital Inclusion Progress - Adedayo

Ade is a fulltime mum, unemployed with no formal qualifications in the UK.

Ade was loaned a device and given a personal mentor to assist at home with studying and completing the online courses.

Her skills have improved significantly and she can access the digital world fully and with confidence.

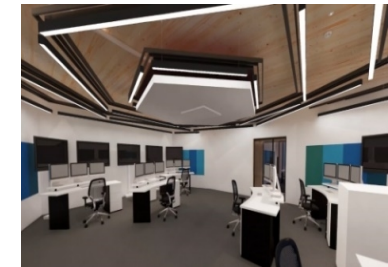
“This training has helped to open my eyes and gave me the boost to pursue my goal of enrolling onto a further education course”



Digital Innovation

Wolverhampton, a Smart City

- Home to **5prinG Application Accelerator** supporting organisations to harness the power of 5G to deliver growth and innovation.
- **Connected Tower Block** pilot bringing together Smart Building Management, health, independent living and digital inclusion.
- The **University of Wolverhampton's** innovation labs and Wolverhampton Cyber Security Institute at the Science Park. Named Cyber University of the Year.
- The **National Brownfield Institute** at Springfield Campus includes the Igloo, a 4D immersive collaborative space.
- Council developing **technology enabled service delivery** roadmaps for better and more efficient services.



Digital Roadmaps

To ensure we are 'driven by digital' the council is committed to delivering better and more efficient services by using technology to deliver and innovate services through:

- Technology enabled service delivery making better and more efficient services.
- Technology enabled independent living and health to improve quality of life, prevent and manage health conditions.
- Addressing key challenges and priorities through technology.
- Ensure digital skills of workforce to embrace and implement digital innovation solutions.

For example, the Council are exploring an Internet of Things Platform which will collate and analyse data from Smart City devices to enable more efficient public services.



Digital Economy

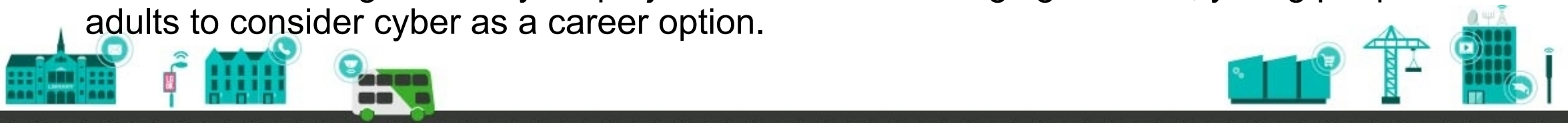
Digital Economy (Business)

- During the pandemic 76% of Small-Medium Businesses relied on digital, 52% used digital to sell more and stay connected. Businesses able to channel shift to online trading & secure online customers were more successful and resilient.
- Wolverhampton's Business Week included a range of workshops around innovation and Virtual Reality for commerce, ranking your business at the top of google, doing business with Amazon, introduction to selling online and digital marketing.
- Market research is being undertaken as part of iGNITE enterprise hub including capturing digital support needs for Wolverhampton businesses to inform business support offer.
- As a city, we're keen to support digital innovation in key sectors and their supply chain and support the growth of the tech sector including taking advantage of regional initiatives such as West Midlands Smart City Region Programme to drive new digital start-ups.
- Creative Chain network has been set up by Wolverhampton digital businesses to raise the profile of creative talent and promote the city's digital capability.



Digital Economy (Skills and Learning)

- Digital skills are crucial for the workplace. The pandemic led to increased digitisation in the workplace, however nationally only 52% of workforce have the necessary digital skills for work.
- There are significant opportunities for growth amongst digital businesses with tech vacancies making up a higher proportion of all vacancies in the UK with the average tech salary 50% higher than the average.
- 69 Wolverhampton residents have benefited from Digital Bootcamps that aims to developing skills and supporting unemployed residents and career changers into digital jobs.
- Digital Wolverhampton Infrastructure Academy is being developed with the City of Wolverhampton College and University of Wolverhampton so local residents can benefit from job opportunities created through the upgrading of digital infrastructure.
- DCMS are funding a local cyber project aimed at encouraging children, young people and adults to consider cyber as a career option.



Any questions?
#digitalwolves

Find out more about Wolverhampton's Digital Programme
at www.digitalwolves.co.uk

