

DIZ Matters

First Edition March 2018

Digital News and Views from around the West Essex and Eastern Hertfordshire Digital Innovation Zone

Digital Catapult, working on behalf of central government, has approached the partnership to take part in its Things Connected innovation programme exploring the use of LPWAN (Low Powered Wide Area Network) technology to solve service challenges Epping Forest DC has agreed to coordinate a joint response as part of the DIZ programme. Funding has been identified and Digital Catapult have confirmed that the DIZ will be one of the four areas nationally that will take part in the next wave. Partners have suggested that the challenge could focus on parking and particularly disabled parking spaces to provide up to the minute information on free spaces.

Digital Innovation Strategy - ARUP consultants, one of the leading consultancies on digital innovation have been selected to work with the DIZ to develop a long term strategy for digital development in the area. The aim of the strategy, which will be completed by July, is to give a clear picture of what digital infrastructure and approaches are already existing across the geographies and sectors that make up the DIZ and to set out the key challenges facing an area like this to become a Beacon for digitally enabled service delivery and economic development. The project is jointly funded by 11 organisations including private sector, health sector, local authorities and economic development organisations.

Design in the Public Sector - The DIZ has successfully bid to take part in a major national programme run by the Local Government Association and The Design Council to redesign services for the over 75s to help them to stay at home and avoid the trauma of unnecessary A&E visits. A team from Princess Alexandra Hospital, Essex Partnership University Trust, West Essex CCG and Epping Forest District Council is now working closely with the LGA and Design Council to deploy the latest design tools and approaches to service redesign to enable residents to stay where they want to be, at home.

Designing an Open Data Source - Giving people the information they need to make timely choices to improve their safety, use of public services or simply make their life easier are the needs that open data sources are trying to respond to. The DIZ has commissioned a feasibility study to look at delivering localised information on an easy to use app that would give them up to the minute news on things like A&E waiting times, progress of local buses or gritting vehicles, air quality reports, traffic jams and parking space availability. The report shows that this may be possible locally but there is a price tag that might be hard to cover at this stage.

Data Centre Opens in Harlow - KAOData in Harlow have celebrated the opening of a huge state of the art data centre in Harlow. KAOData are a key partner of the Digital Innovation Zone and have invested over 200million pounds in their Harlow venture. Jan Daan Luycks, CEO of KAOData said “The ever-expanding data economy continues to drive the need for IT capacity. KAO London One provides highly resilient capacity and connectivity for national and international business. For more information on the data campus, one of the largest of its kind in the UK, visit kaodata.com

Local Full Fibre Network Challenge Fund - Fastest speeds and future proofed infrastructure - that is

what Local Full Fibre Networks are all about. The DIZ is putting a team together to explore the potential for a bid into the £200m Challenge Fund set aside by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) to encourage extended building of LFFN infrastructure and make Fibre to the Premises connectivity a reality for more residents and businesses. The timescales for the Challenge Fund will be looking for bids to be submitted in the Summer of 2018.

Public Health England relocating to Harlow - The relocation of Public Health England (PHE), one of the worlds most renowned health organisations, to Harlow will offer enormous opportunities for the town and the surrounding DIZ. A large proportion of PHE's work is data related and they are also pioneering new ways of using new digital technologies to offer practical health and wellbeing help to people.

Supply Chain of Digital Skills - Where will tomorrow's workforce come from? - This was the key challenge for the third Smart Places Seminar held by the DIZ at Haileybury school in Hertfordshire in February. To help answer this question the event delivered a programme of excellent speakers from the private and public sectors. Almost 60 partners came together to share their thoughts on where we are currently and what needed to happen to make sure that there is a supply chain of digitally skilled people in place to enable business to grow, public services to develop and local people to get the opportunities to secure the great jobs that this would inevitably bring. Copies of the skills seminar report, as well as reports form the previous seminars on Digital Infrastructure and Health and Wellbeing can be downloaded from www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/

Superfast Broadband Investment continues to roll out - The Superfast broadband programmes in both Hertfordshire and Essex continue to provide the backbone of the Digital Innovation Zone. With Essex CC and Hertfordshire CC both delivering projects that invest close to £200m on digital infrastructure. enormous sums are being invested to make sure these counties are some of the best in the county. The target is to provide all areas, including the most rural ones, with access to broadband of at least 30mb speed. For more information on broadband delivery in your area visit www.connectedcounties.org/ for Hertfordshire or www.superfastessex.org/ for Essex.

Introducing the DIZ Board - Key representatives from services providers in eastern Hertfordshire and west Essex have pledged to work together to make sure that the latest and best digital technology can be deployed in our area to boost economic growth, job quality and health and wellbeing services. All five district councils (Broxbourne, East Herts, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford), Essex and Hertfordshire county councils, the local acute hospital and a clinical commissioning group, our universities and voluntary groups with key partners from the private sector are looking at attracting and coordinating infrastructure investment. And most importantly answering the 'So What?' question about how we use the technology and investment to improve local peoples lives today and tomorrow.

To find out more about the Digital Innovation Zone Board, its members and its work please contact Mike Warr, Lead Officer for the Digital Programme at Epping Forest District Council.

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