

Knowledge sharing

Infrastructure
Accelerator



5G Case Study

Knowledge sharing

Synopsis

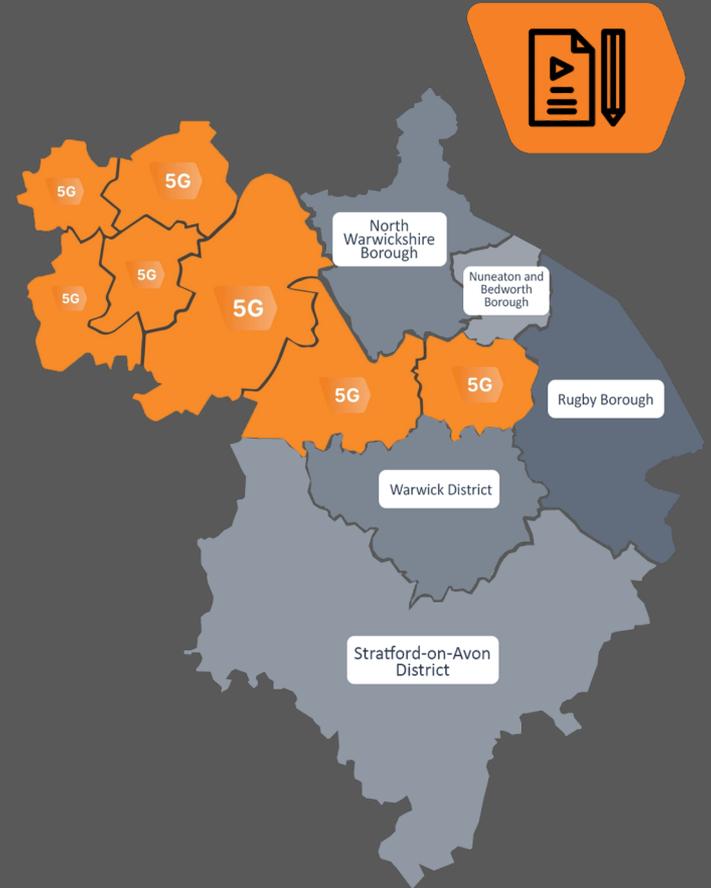
West Midlands 5G (WM5G) is delivering the UK's first region-wide 5G testbed with two key objectives:

- To accelerate the roll-out of 5G across the region
- To test, prove and scale new applications and services

Together with Mobile Network Operators and all seven local authorities within the West Midlands, the Infrastructure Acceleration team has already helped the region's towns and cities accelerate access to 5G, working closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) seven constituent local authorities in Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell, Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry.

To truly harness the revolutionary benefits of 5G, it is vital we get the foundations right and develop a 5G ecosystem that is fit for the future. Our team's work has directly contributed to the West Midlands recognised as the best-connected region for 5G in the UK.*

Getting the infrastructure right now will mean businesses and public sector organisations can get involved much sooner, which will help to position the UK as a world leader in 5G technology. Building on its experience and successes in the West Midlands, the IA team has already shared its knowledge with over 40 other authorities across the country. To enable wider and ongoing sharing, the team has developed a standardized approach to knowledge sharing, trialing the roll-out by working closely with Warwickshire County Council and the five Warwickshire district councils.





Problem

Over the last five years, the legal and planning regulations governing the deployment of mobile network telecommunications and masts have changed dramatically. This has resulted in market challenges in areas such as determining compensation and consideration, as well as access rules and rights, all hindering the roll-out of 5G.

Local authorities are stretched and understanding the barriers to 5G roll-out and balancing socio-economic benefits can be difficult when they are dealing with a range of pressures. These include budget cuts, skills shortages and the limited autonomy that they have to tackle on a daily basis.



Solution

Testing a new approach to knowledge sharing wider than the WMCA region, WM5G commenced with an initial pilot with Warwickshire County Council and the five Warwickshire district councils.

Focussing on collaborative working, the first step was an introductory session to explore Warwickshire's motivation for 5G.

This was followed by a formal investigation, which assessed the council's needs and requirements, while also identifying key personnel to drive this forward.

The WM5G team then began its knowledge sharing exercise, covering areas including planning, highways, assets, and working with the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs). These sessions were followed by quarterly progress meetings over a period of 3-9 months to maintain support.



Benefit

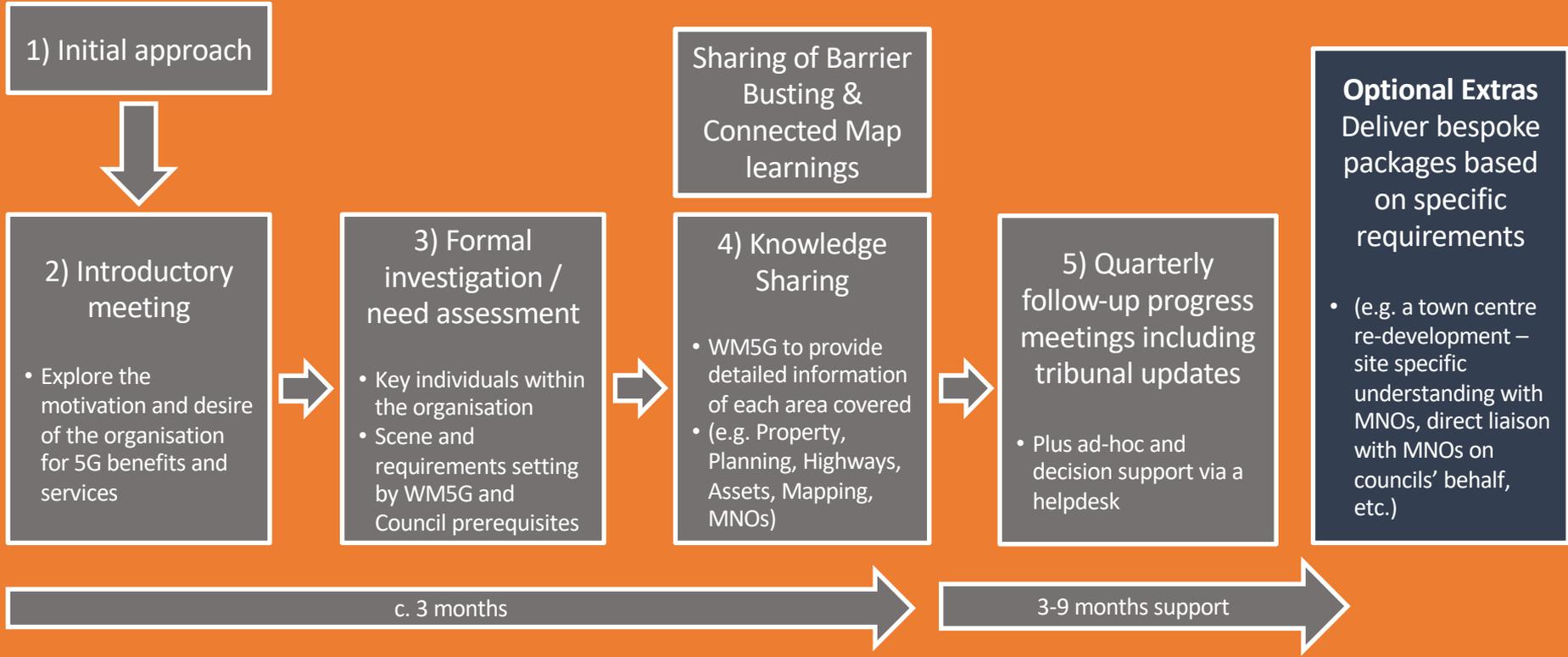
Our team furthered the knowledge sharing process by meeting with digital and operational representatives from Warwickshire's district councils.

Our methodology brings together expertise across many areas, including: compulsory purchase orders, industry networks, local authority knowhow and planning proficiency.

This continuous level of knowledge sharing will help authorities outside of the WMCA achieve some of the trailblazing differences WM5G's team has delivered to-date.

WM5G has successfully accelerated the deployment of 5G connectivity by 6-12 months across the West Midlands. By working collaboratively across the UK, our aim is to maximise opportunity for other councils to adopt best practice.

Process



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We have achieved so much within the West Midlands Combined Authority area to-date that it made sense to build on those successes by sharing our knowledge across the UK. While we had already engaged a number of local authorities at a distance via conferences and events, working with Warwickshire County Council was a much more hands-on approach and one that has enabled the council to see the value in 5G and accelerate its roll-out within its own constituency.

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Rhys Enfield, Head of Infrastructure
Acceleration, West Midlands 5G

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I cannot speak highly enough for the help and support given to Warwickshire over the last few months. The expertise of the WM5G Infrastructure Acceleration Team and their professional delivery of a series of meetings covering the Electronic Communication Code and National Planning Policy has been critical to our progress in developing our Digital Infrastructure Strategy.

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John Parmiter, Digital Infrastructure
Manager, Warwickshire County Council

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We are indebted to the WM5G Infrastructure Acceleration Team for the help and support they have provided, not only to the Warwickshire County Council but to the five Districts and Boroughs as well. The meetings with our Digital Portfolio Holders, Chairs of Planning Committees together with Asset Managers and Planning Officers has proven to be critical in gaining the overall collaboration needed to progress our Digital Infrastructure Strategy.

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Cllr. Kam Kaur, Portfolio Holder and Digital Infrastructure
Ambassador, Warwickshire County Council

Takeaways

Sustain



In order to continue the accelerated roll-out of 5G wider than the WMCA area and across the rest of the UK, WM5G is continuing to knowledge share – using the process that has been proven as a concept with Warwickshire County Council.

Learnings



To continue this momentum and to step into a 5G-enabled future, we must all focus on three things: engagement, conversation and collaboration, for the benefit of our citizens, communities and companies.

Contacts



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