

Essex + Herts

Digital Innovation Zone

Annual Progress Report 2020/21



ESSEX+HERTS
digital
innovation
zone

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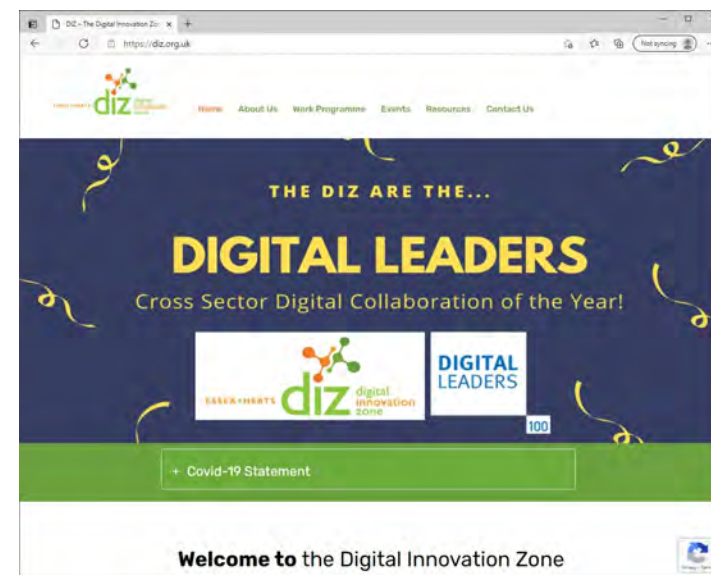
Annual Progress Report 2020/21

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This is the second DIZ annual progress report to be produced since the formation of the DIZ. We hope that you find it interesting.

This and all subsequent progress reports will be circulated to all DIZ Board members and made available to download from the DIZ website.

If you would like to receive an email copy of this or any past or future progress reports, please contact the DIZ team using the details shown below.



For further information on the DIZ and its work programme visit the DIZ website at www.diz.org.uk

Alternatively, you can contact a member of the DIZ team:

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You can also follow the DIZ on Twitter [@DIZ_Matters](https://twitter.com/DIZ_Matters)

Foreword



In a shocking, sad and enormously disruptive year the UK and the DIZ has shown great resilience and innovation to continue to serve our people better and be better connected. Our health partners in particular have risen wonderfully to this challenge, supported by local and central government, the private sector and, of course, our invaluable partners in the voluntary and community sector.

Commentators have remarked on the scale of digital transformation in response to the pandemic in order to maintain our service provision, together with keeping our economy rolling in the face of rapid and profound change. Some have characterised this period as seeing five years of planned digital transformation occurring in in five months.

While many of the digital approaches that we have evolved throughout the pandemic will be scaled back, it is clear that greater digital working, whether because of its efficiency, effectiveness or flexibility will be with us forever. The DIZ will be working with all its partners to make sure we get the balance right putting the end user, citizen and customer at the centre of everything we do.



Councillor Alan Lion, DIZ Chair and Digital Member Lead, Epping Forest DC

Councillor Linda Haysey, DIZ Vice-Chair and Leader, East Herts DC



Introduction





Introduction

The DIZ has experienced, along with everyone else in society, a tumultuous period that, one year ago, no-one would have predicted.

In the last twelve months, with much of everyday life shut down, increasing periods of time spent at home and enforced separation from families, friends and work colleagues we have seen digital technology, infrastructure and applications become front and centre in all of our lives.

Throughout this period of uncertainty and change the DIZ has sought to continue its journey of digital innovation and exploration. It has worked to ensure not only that our residents and businesses were equipped to cope with the challenges they faced but also that they are given the support they need to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, embrace the opportunities that digital continues to offer and maximise the benefit to the DIZ area of continual digital innovation, investment and inclusion.

This report seeks to capture the progress and achievements of the DIZ over the last twelve months and to set out how we will continue to push at the boundaries of innovative technology to future-proof our economies and healthcare services.





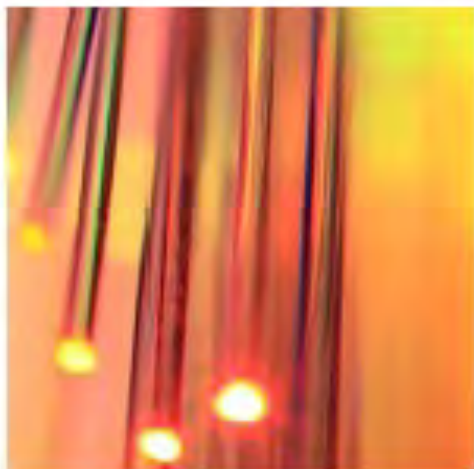
Infrastructure - LFFN and digital healthcare

Having successfully secured £1.7m of funding from Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport in 2019/20 a key focal point for the DIZ in 2020/21 has been on getting the contractual arrangements in place with partners and then kicking-off the physical delivery of the infrastructure that will transform the connectivity of our GP surgeries across the DIZ,

both in terms of download and upload speeds and in terms of network resilience. The network will enable our hard-pressed outstanding health partners to deliver more-effective and efficient services that wrap themselves around the patient.

Beyond the physical installation, it was always the intention of the DIZ to work with health partners to demonstrate the value and benefit that could be derived from this investment, however, that business case has become self-evident as health partners have increasingly sought to rely upon digital connectivity to relieve some of the pressures on frontline health services brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The LFFN network will connect up 77 GP surgeries to gigabit capable fibre-to-the-premise broadband networks that will enable even more healthcare provision to be moved away from single-point acute locations such as town-centre hospitals to a more community-based model. There have been challenges to the delivery, not least the impact of



COVID-19, and the pressures of delivering infrastructure within a health environment facing unprecedented demands on its resources, but working through these challenges with our health partners, delivery partners and DCMS strengthened these relationships and has given us greater appreciation of the complexities and requirements of such a multi-layered project.

76 GPs to be
connected



£1.6m DCMS
funding investment



170,000+ metres of
fibre infrastructure

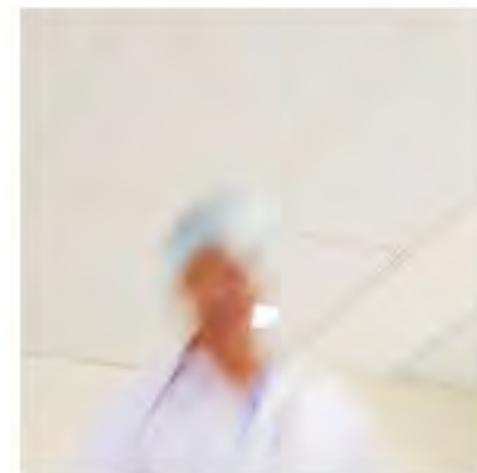
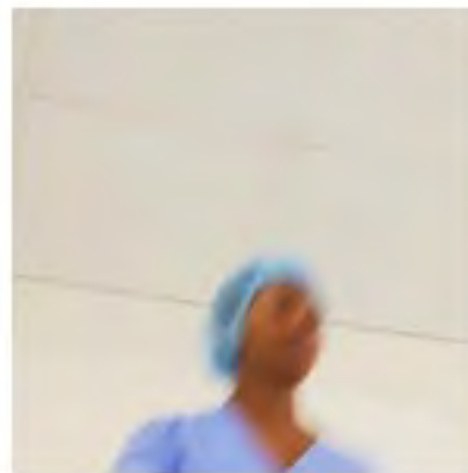


40,000+ premises in
scope for fibre on
demand



In becoming the first area in the country to follow-through on the national government's pledge to deliver fibre connectivity to every GP surgery, the DIZ network will be able to support initiatives that would otherwise have been impractical.

Use of wearable technology, real-time monitoring of patient health data and signals, online case reviews across multiple health partners and increasing use of digital for both the booking and delivery of appointments are among the avenues we will explore with our health partners over the coming year as we move from focus on the delivery of the infrastructure to the realisation of the benefits it can deliver.



Inclusion

£188,000 funding
from NHS Charities



Developing a
mobile 'databank'



Support for the most
excluded with devices,
data and training

Inclusion

Leaving no-one behind in a digital transformation, at a time when more and more critical public and private sector services are being pushed online, is vitally important so that our residents, service users and our more vulnerable communities do not miss out. The DIZ continues to work with its CVS partners in both Hertfordshire and Essex to explore how this can best be achieved.

Building on experience gained collectively amongst partners through initiatives such as the Living Smart Homes Project, work with Citizens Online and the Digital Inclusion Smart Places Seminars, the DIZ has begun to develop an all-encompassing, web-based digital inclusion platform. Working closely in collaboration with CVS and health partners led to the award of £188,000 from the NHS Charities Fund to fund this critical piece of work in west Essex.

The project will seek to address digital exclusion through four workstreams:

- Providing reconditioned or new devices
- Providing digital skills support, building upon the local digital buddies scheme
- Providing mobile data and fixed line broadband connectivity to support use of the devices provided

- Delivering a web platform to enable support to be requested, training arranged and devices or data donated.

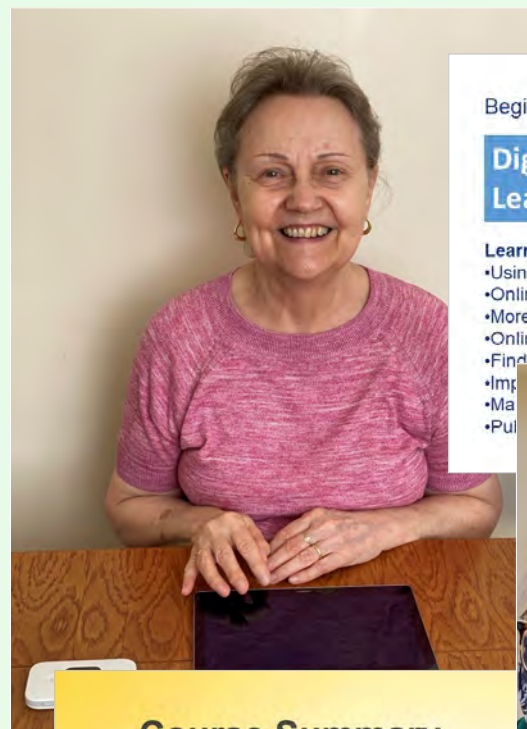
The key USP of the project is the development of a 'databank'. The thinking behind the initiative is to build on the proven model of foodbanks and explore the potential for people to not only donate money towards the purchase of mobile data and connectivity for others but to also facilitate the donation of unused or unwanted mobile phone data for use by those who cannot afford their own mobile data packages.

The project is being delivered on behalf of the DIZ by our community and voluntary sector partners at WECAN, led by CVS Uttlesford. The funding will enable the team, to recruit a full-time project manager to plan and deliver all aspects of the project over the course of the next two years. For more details on the west Essex project you can contact Clive Emmett on clive.emmett@cvsu.org.uk



Supported by

NHS CHARITIES
TOGETHER



Beginners computer training

Digital Learners

Learners develop skills related to:

- Using your computer or device
- Online basics (using the internet, online form, email, internet safety)
- More internet skills
- Online safety
- Finding a job online
- Imp
- Ma
- Pul



Course Summary

This **Basic Computing for Work** course tips to help you stay safe online and an in that are commonly found in the workplace

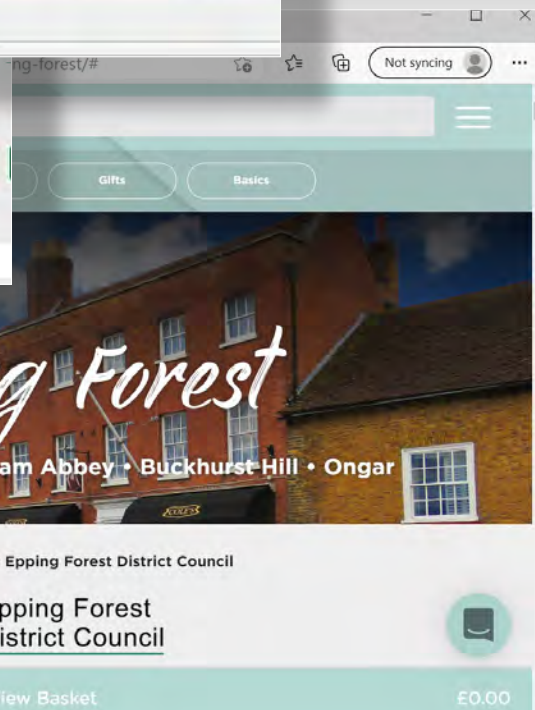
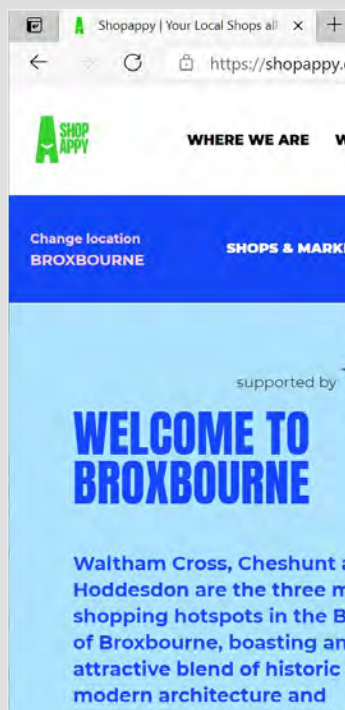
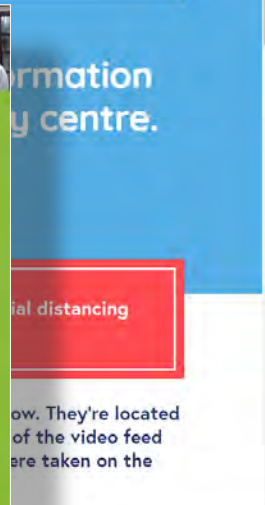
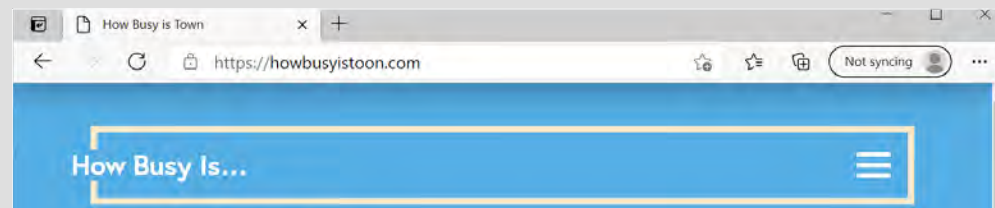
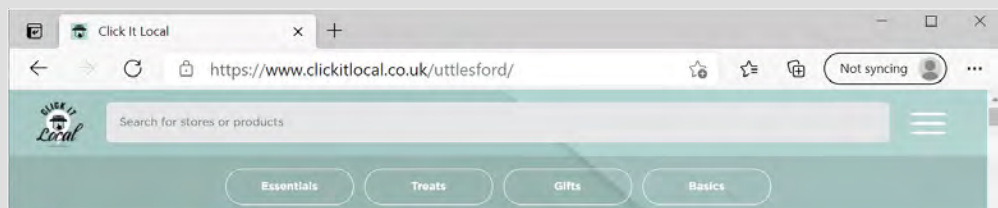
We will cover the following modules:

- ✓ Smarter Job Search, your Internet Profile & Social Media
- ✓ Apps: Word Processors & Spreadsheets
- ✓ Safer use of Email & Internet Security
- ✓ Intro to Database, the Cloud, Information Systems, DPA & GDPR



Actively Supporting Our Communities

@cvsbeh
www.cvsbeh.org.uk



Supporting Recovery of Our High Streets and Town Centres

As soon as the COVID-19 pandemic had caused all of the high streets in the DIZ to close for in-person business, the DIZ and its local authority partners began exploring options to support their recovery once lockdown was lifted. At an early stage, the DIZ Executive Board established the recovery of our high streets through digital as a key priority in the work programme and established a Town Centre Special Interest Group to make recommendations for digital high street interventions. Open discussion and debate at DIZ Advisory Board meetings enabled the sharing of best practice for town centre support and coordination of approaches among partners.

In conjunction with Digital Leaders and as part of the DLWeek event, the DIZ delivered an online seminar 'Can Digital Save the High Street?' with contributions from Enterprise Nation, Maybe* Tech, Newcastle City Council and Anglia Ruskin University. The event shared some of the most exciting and up to date ways in which the high streets can use digital to drive footfall, upskill businesses and enable residents to return to the high street with confidence. The linkup with Newcastle CC has also enabled the DIZ to share in the learning from their MHCLG funded 'How Busy Is Toon' project and led to a pilot project being developed in Epping High Street to repurpose the CCTV network to provide a footfall monitor that can let residents, via a web platform, know how busy the high street is.

A number of online shopping portals have also been established over the course of the last 12 months to support the businesses of the DIZ to trade online whilst physically closed as well as accessing the social media guidance and best practice that can encourage residents to return to shopping in-person once lockdown is lifted.



5 new mobile
retail platforms



Pilot project
on CCTV &
Footfall



290+ High Street online
event registrations

Partnership and Funding

In what has been a particularly challenging time, the DIZ partnership has gone from strength to strength over the last year. New organisations from a variety of sectors have been keen to support and attend the DIZ Advisory Board meetings which, early on in the first period of lockdown were pivoted to be more responsive, more informative and more relevant to the emerging global pandemic. Held amid real-life challenges, they focused on what works digitally and, of equal importance, where gaps remained and failures occurred.

The DIZ has created a space for collaboration and engagement, breaking down sectoral and organisational silos and attracting and coordinating investment. This has been enhanced by regular guest speaker slots at DIZ Board meetings on a wide range of digital issues and initiatives with speakers from organisations such as Jacobs (digital consultants), Redcentric (digital infrastructure providers) and EELGA (regional local government) as well as DIZ partners such as CGI, Anglia Ruskin University, Essex CC and Princess Alexandra Hospital.

One of the most significant events held as lockdown eased was an important review, among partners in the private sector, health, education and community sectors, of the last year and how they had evolved their digital offer as well as what more needed to be achieved moving forward.

The DIZ is currently funded and governed by the local authority partners of the Executive Board (including Hertfordshire CC with effect from 2021/22), although we continue to explore appropriate potential funding and partnership opportunities with a number of public sector partners.



7 x local authority
funding partners



3 x VCS partners
4 x health partners



3 x FE colleges
1 x university



3 x private sector



Knowledge Leadership, Innovation and Reputation

The reputation of the DIZ - established and grown through its unique collaborative approach to place-based innovation, a regular programme of external engagement and the continual delivery of its ongoing work programme - has seen numerous external organisations approach the partnership to explore how the DIZ approach might be applied in other areas and across other sectors. Combined authorities, regional and national health institutions and key digital innovation funders and accelerators have been among the organisations that have contacted the DIZ to both better understand the DIZ approach to place-based collaboration and to discuss the potential for joint working on specific digital projects.

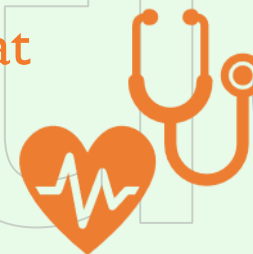
This external face of the DIZ has been highlighted and promoted through regular involvement in key online digital events and conferences. The DIZ has taken part in three Digital Leaders events presenting the 'Building A Place-Based Digital Collaboration', 'Can Digital Save the High Street?' and 'A Cross-Sector look back at COVID-19 and the Impact of Digital', webinars always bringing in a fantastic line-up of national, regional and local specialists to speak. The DIZ Programme Manager also took part as a featured speaker in the UK Authority 'Smart Places Conference'.



Delivered 3 x
Digital Leaders
online events

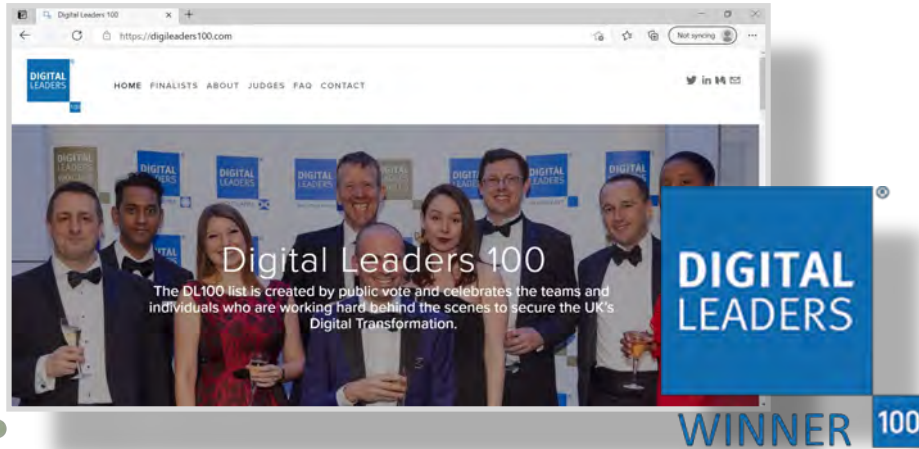


Featured speaker at
UK Authority
Smart places



Approached by
national / regional
health organisations

Recognised in Digital Leaders #DL100 List & Winner! 'Cross-Sector Digital Collaboration of the Year'



Awarded iese 'Certificate of Excellence'



Certificate of Excellence Award to mark significant innovations in transforming local public services



Recognition

2020/21 has brought forward recognition for the work of the DIZ that could only have been wished for when first setting out to explore digital opportunities in our place.

The delivery of digital initiatives across the DIZ that have a very real and tangible impact on, and benefit for, our residents and businesses is reward itself and remains the primary focus of the DIZ. However, it is both rewarding and a validation to have those efforts recognised by peers and colleagues also working towards similar goals.

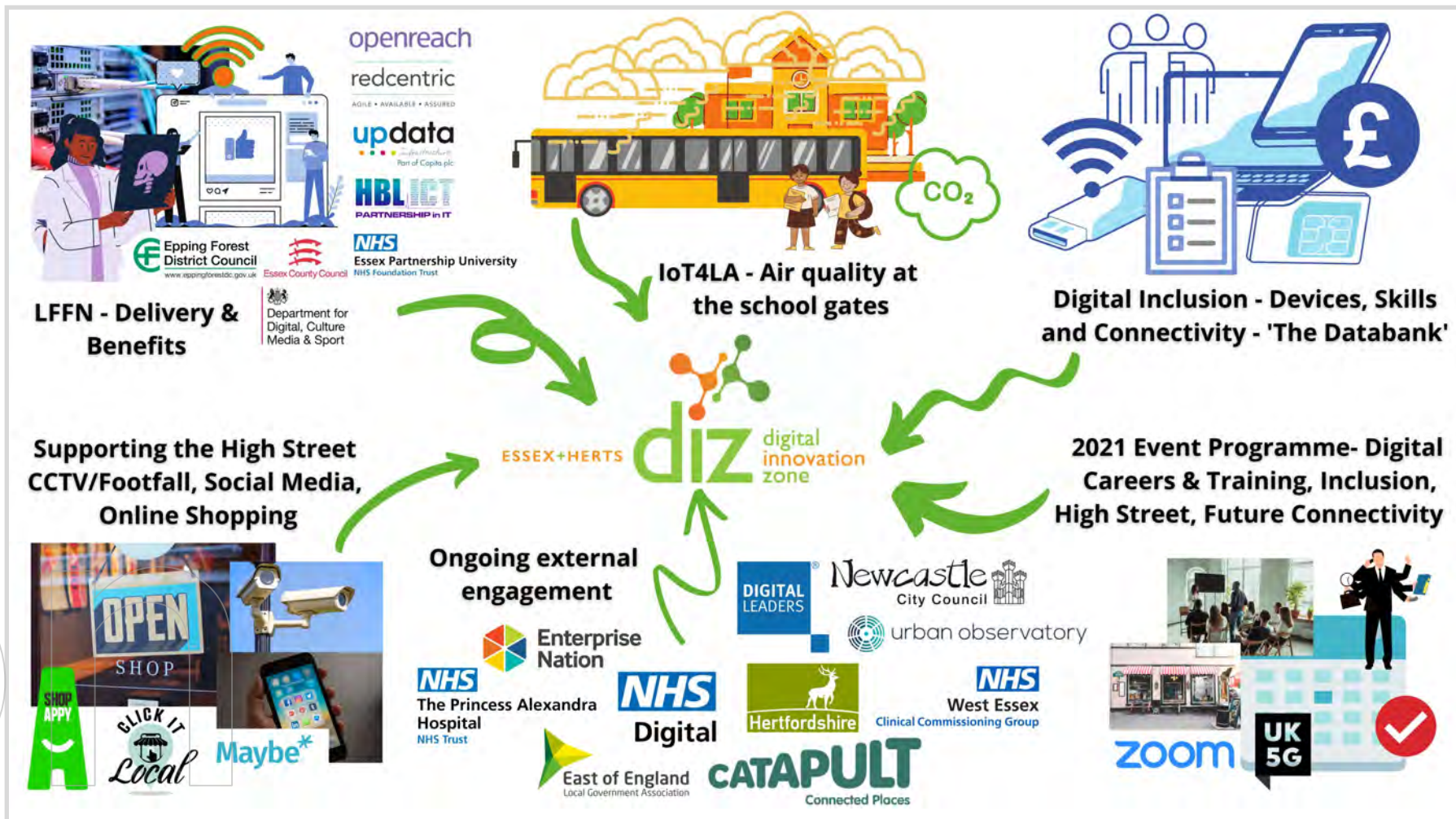
Being selected as one of the Digital Leaders #DL100 List was a hugely exciting achievement but to follow that up by being placed in the top 3 and the category final by a public vote and then awarded as the 'Cross-Sector Digital Collaboration of the Year' was enormously rewarding and further recognition of the value in our place-based approach. Digital Leaders said that the DIZ had demonstrated **"great breadth of**

engagement across both public and private sectors" and had established an **"exemplar for regional development and collaboration"** that could be usefully replicated by local authority organisations across the UK.

Since that award the DIZ has also gone on, following its submission to the iese Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021, to be recognised with an iese 'Certificate of Excellence', recognising **"...the exemplary standard of the work demonstrated by your submission in the difficult climate of the past year"**

Future Plans

Looking ahead to 2021/22, the DIZ already has an exciting programme of work in place. We will continue to explore new opportunities for funding, applications and initiatives that will bring a direct benefit to the residents and businesses across the DIZ. If you would like to work with us on this journey or just share learning as we go, please do get in touch. We would be delighted to hear from you.



Mission

Our Mission

While the partners of the DIZ, individually and collectively, are committed to innovate and flex an approach to deliver a better-served, better connected place, our mission statement remains the same:

To be the best connected place of its type in the UK.

A place of innovation and inclusion.

A place where the benefits of digital investment are harnessed, maximised and shared across residents, commuters, businesses and borders.



Contact

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