Broadband update - Wem ward

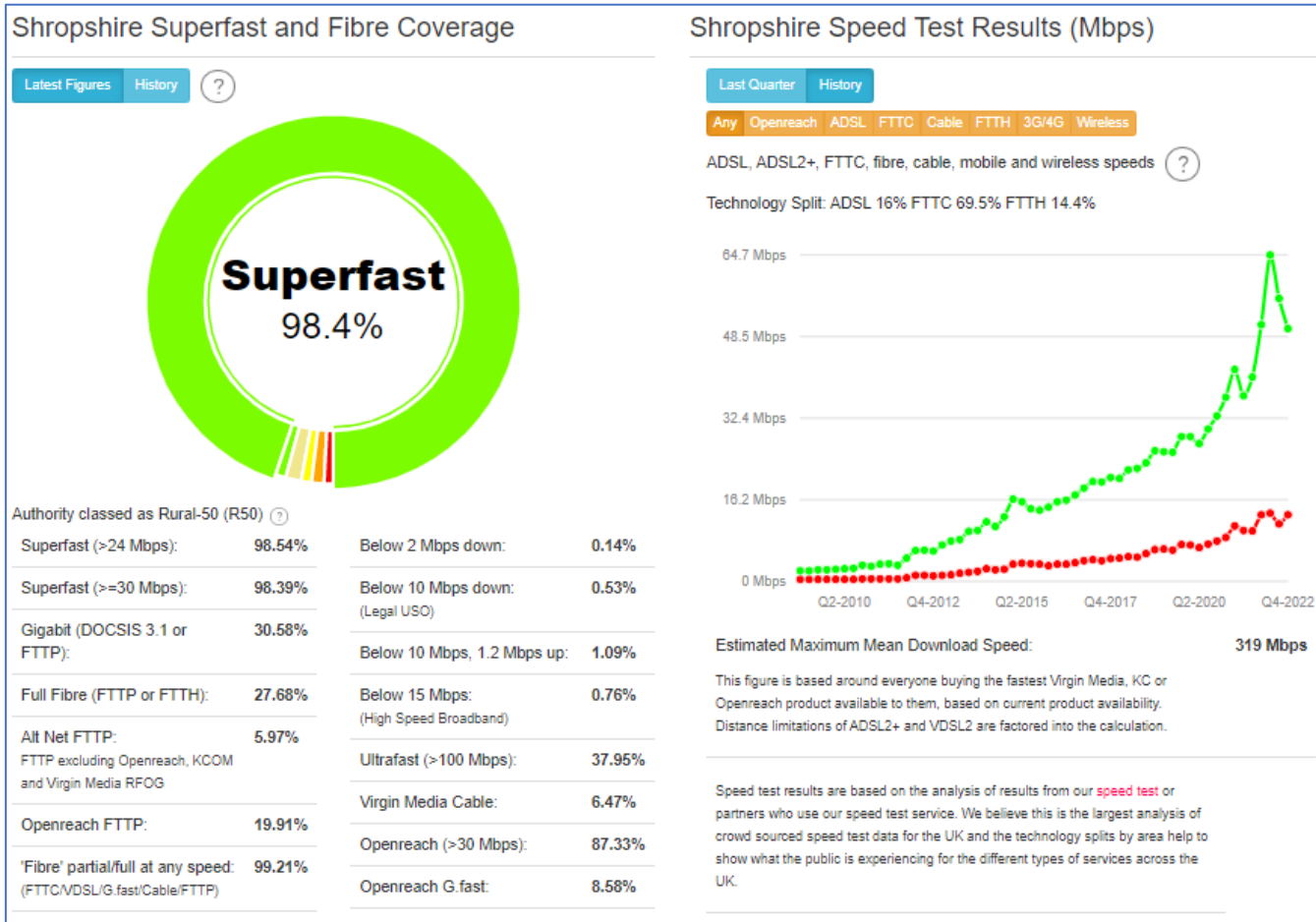Chris Taylor, Broadband Manager
Shropshire Council

Background

- Since 2013, Shropshire Council and its funding partners have invested over £32m in building better broadband networks with the aim of providing access to superfast broadband to all premises in the Shropshire Council area.

- In 2013 & 2015 Shropshire Council entered into contracts with BT/Openreach. Both contracts are now closed.

- In 2017, Shropshire Council signed a contract with Airband to deliver superfast broadband via its 'fixed wireless access' broadband network to >14,000 premises. In 2020 a technical change was applied to the contract that meant that the final 2,200 premises would be delivered using a 'fibre to the premises' broadband net-work. This contract will close spring 2023.

Broadband achievements to date:

- 98.4% of premises in the Shropshire Council area now have access to a superfast broadband connection. This information is collected from impartial sources: https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/shropshire,E06000051

- The Local Broadband plan remains to provide all premises with access to superfast broadband (>30 megabits per second) with as many having access to a gigabit-capable network.

- Wem ward has received direct benefit from all three broadband contracts. Superfast broadband is available to the majority of premises from the Airband and/or Openreach networks.

- Some parts of the ward also gained access to gigabit-capable 'fibre to the premises' or FTTP broadband from Airband (Coton) & Openreach (Northwood).

Shropshire Broadband Coverage

Shropshire Superfast and Fibre Coverage

Shropshire Speed Test Results (Mbps)

Source:
https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/shropshire,E06000051

Current situation

- Some parts of Wem town have gigabit-capable 'fibre to the premises' or FTTP broadband, which has been provided by Openreach commercially.

- Alternative network providers Full Fibre Limited & Freedom Fibre have also announced their commercial intentions to bring FTTP to the town.

- To check availability, use the Ofcom broadband online checker: https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/en-gb/broadband-coverage.

Project Gigabit

- The UK government has committed £5bn to Project Gigabit, which aims to provide at least 85% of UK premises with access to a gigabit-capable broadband (1,000 megabits per second) network by 2025 (and nationwide coverage by 2030).

- The broadband infrastructure market is expected to reach the 80% coverage mark, with public funding subsidising the non-commercial remainder.

- BDUK (Building Digital UK) are responsible for this new programme and its strategy <u>not Shropshire Council</u>.

Project Gigabit - procurement

- In 2021 BDUK commenced market engagement with all broadband infrastructure providers to identify where there were projected commercial gaps. The purpose is to use public funding to intervene in these gap areas.

- BDUK have launched two procurements in Shropshire. These are expected to be concluded in spring 2023:
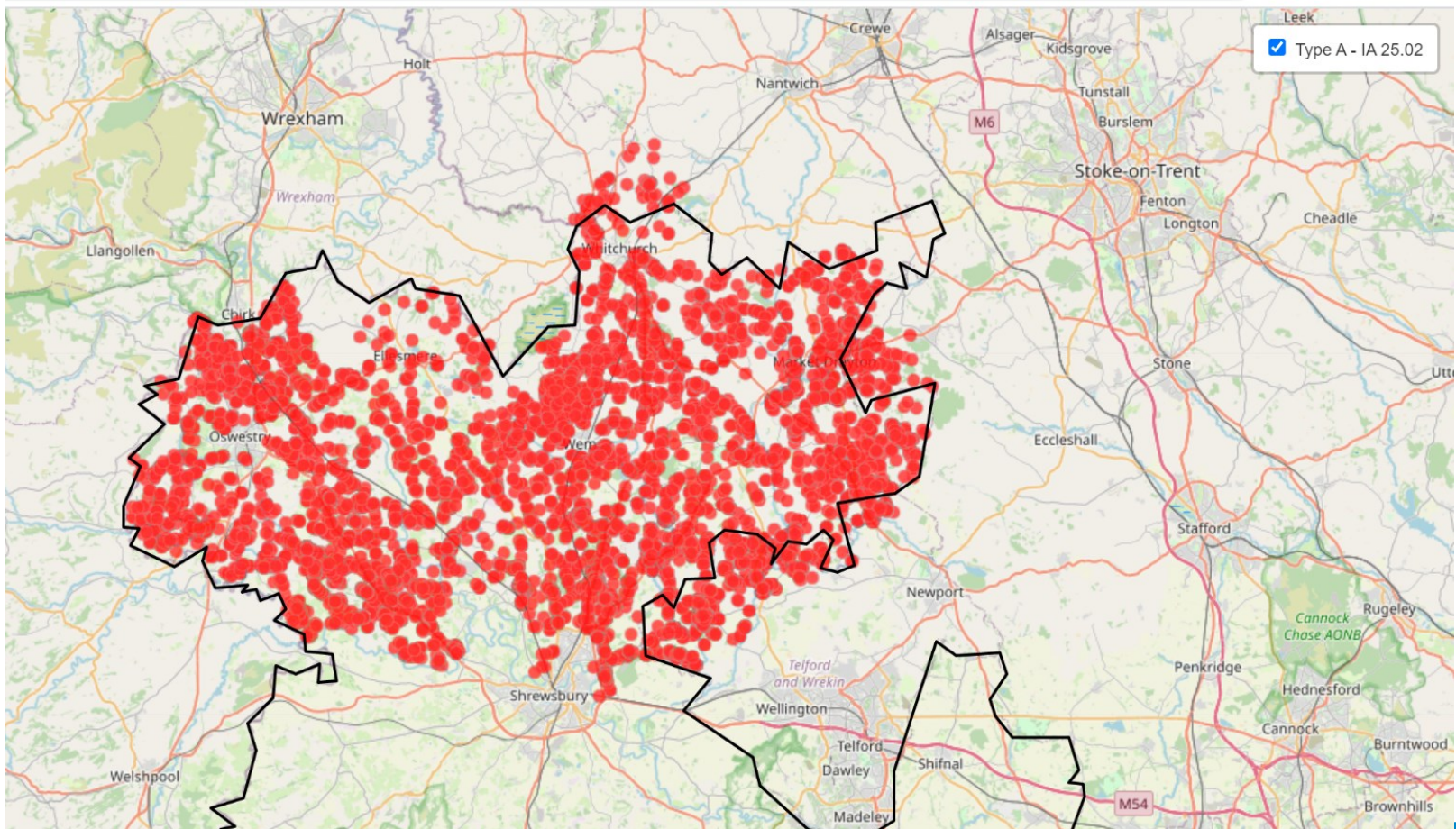
  Lot 25.01 Mid West Shropshire
  - 7,359 premises (all in the Shropshire Council area)
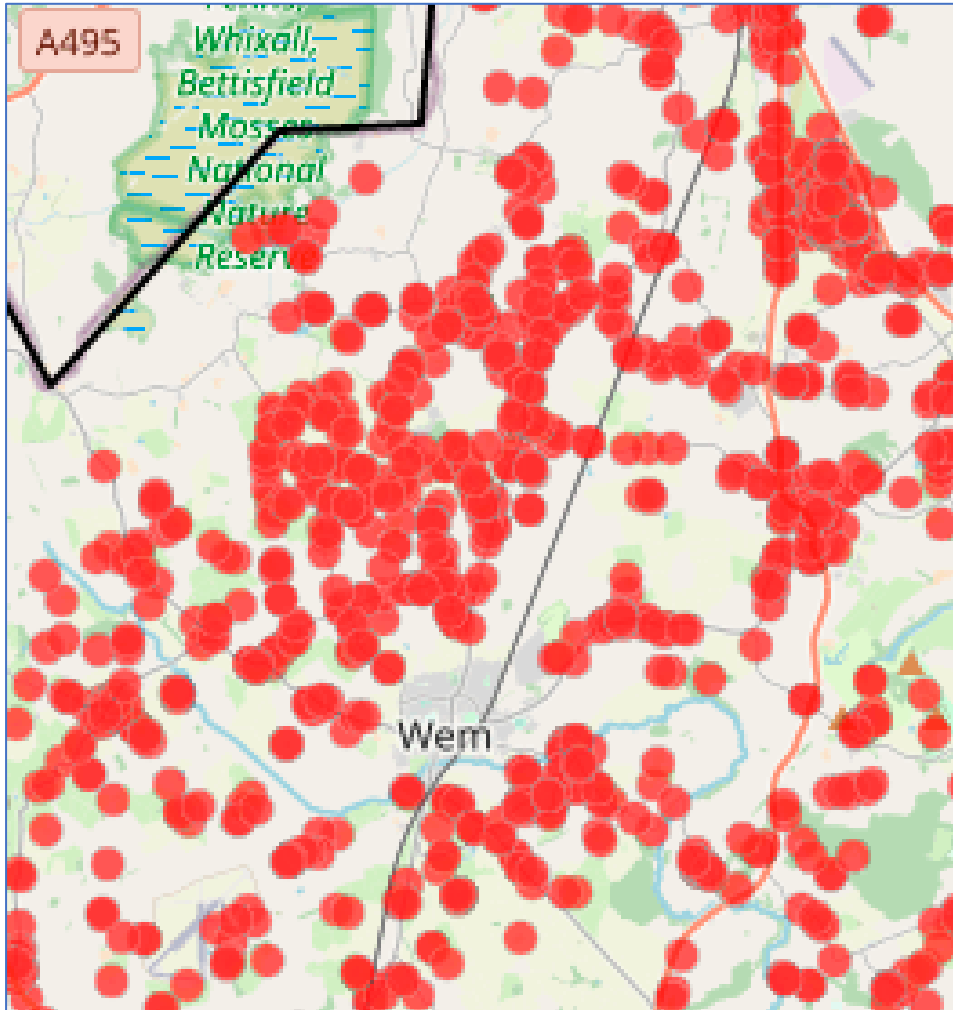 - Subsidy available £10,805,000

  Lot 25.02 North Shropshire
  - 12,277 premises (10,752 in Shropshire Council area)
  - Subsidy available £24,042,000

- On conclusion of a successful procurement exercise we expect further information on which premises will be included in the contract to be made available by BDUK.

BDUK Lot 25.02 intervention area

Lot 25.02 intervention area - Wem

Parish	Lot 25.02 Prems	Total Parish Prems
Wem Urban	20	3125
Wem Rural	502	777
Whixall	107	373

Project Gigabit - vouchers

- Vouchers will only be available to premises that are not in a commercial plan or in a procurement (Lot 25.01 & Lot ,25.02) and are in a rural area (ONS)

- UK Gigabit Vouchers are worth up to £4,500 per eligible premise.

- The Council expects to top up the value of vouchers to £7,000, provided the premises cannot get superfast broadband.

- To qualify for the UK Gigabit Voucher Scheme , groups of two or more residents/businesses must be located in a rural area with current/planned broadband speeds of less than 100mbps.

- The UK Gigabit Voucher Scheme is administered by the UK government and not by Shropshire Council.

- **To apply for a voucher you must contact a broadband infrastructure supplier.**

- To check availability, please go to: https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/#suppliers

- **Shropshire Council recommends deferring any application until after the outcome of the Lot 25.02 procurement.**

Contact details:

- Shropshire Council broadband team:
  - 01743 252203
  - chris.taylor@shropshire.gov.uk
  - ben.walker@shropshire.gov.uk

- Ofcom: https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/

- Airband: https://www.airband.co.uk/

- Freedom Fibre: https://www.freedomfibre.com/

- Full Fibre: https://fibreheroes.co.uk/

- Openreach: https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/ultrafast-full-fibre-broadband

- SWS: https://www.swsbroadband.net/