Digital Exclusion

Digital Exclusion and Inclusion

- Digital inclusion is about ensuring everyone has access and the skills to use the Internet and digital technologies. Digitally excluded people can lack skills, confidence, and motivation, along with having limited or no access to equipment and connectivity.

- Two socio-demographic groupings of those most likely to be digitally excluded have been previously identified ('**mature and older people**' and '**working age on low incomes**').

- In Sevenoaks District, 16.8% of households are classified as 'mature and older people' (21.9% for KCC) and 8.0% of households are classified as 'working age on low incomes' (15.9% for KCC).
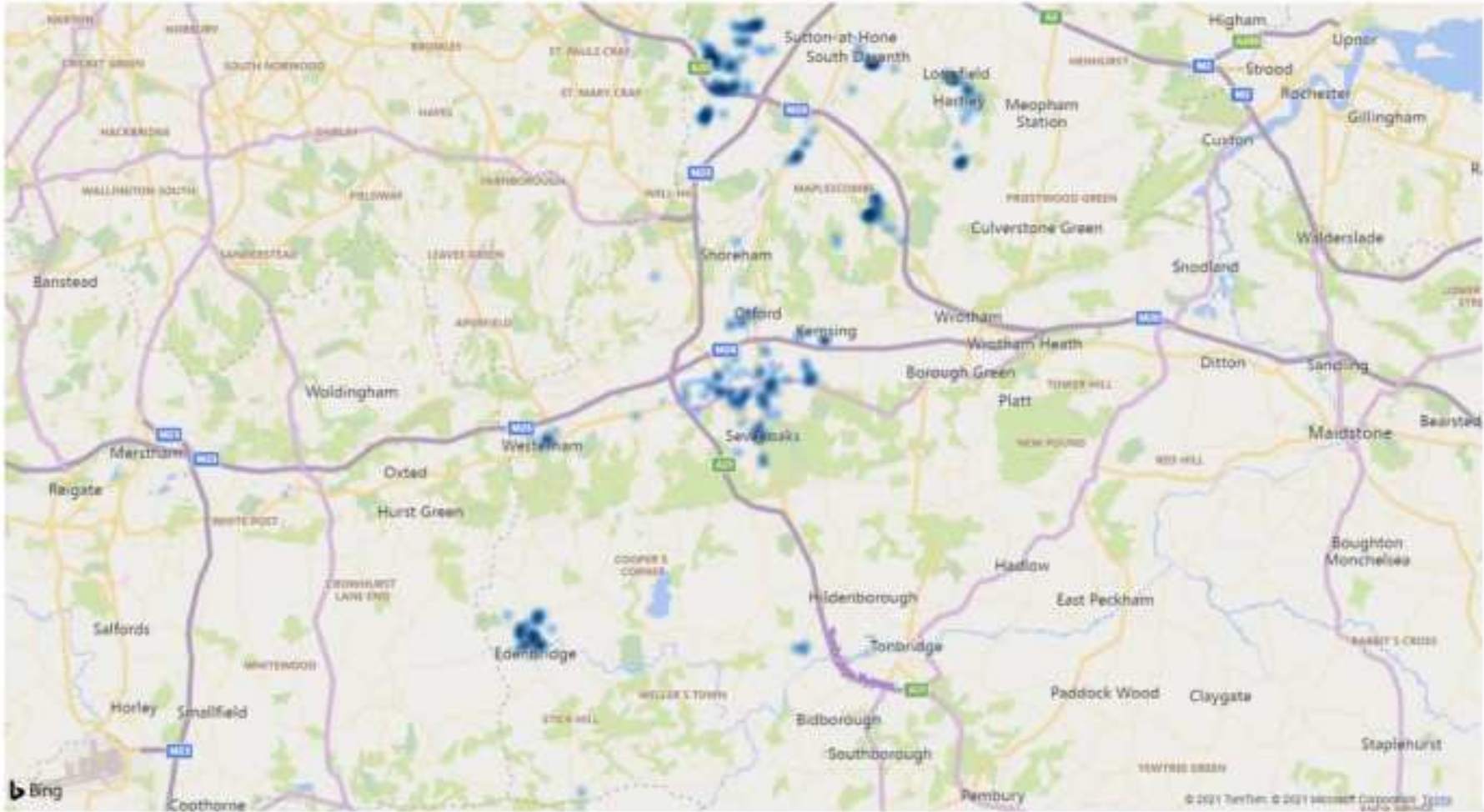
In Sevenoaks District…

- 20% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are classified as one of the four digitally excluded profiles according to the Internet User Classification. This is a significantly lower proportion of LSOAs than Kent overall (46%).
- 0% of LSOAs in Sevenoaks are in the 10% most likely to be digitally excluded neighbourhoods in Kent.
- The average LSOA digital inclusion score is significantly lower than for Kent (41.58 vs 49.32) with fewer LSOAs in the most likely to be digitally excluded.
- 40.6% of LSOAs are categorised in the most likely to digitally access the Census (equivalent to the UK).
- The average proportion of households who use the Internet less than every day for LSOAs is 9.4%, which is significantly lower than for Kent.
    - Interestingly, around 40% households in one LSOA in Sevenoaks are likely to not
      use the Internet every day as compared to 0% of households in another LSOA in the same district, highlighting the marked disparity in Internet use within the district.
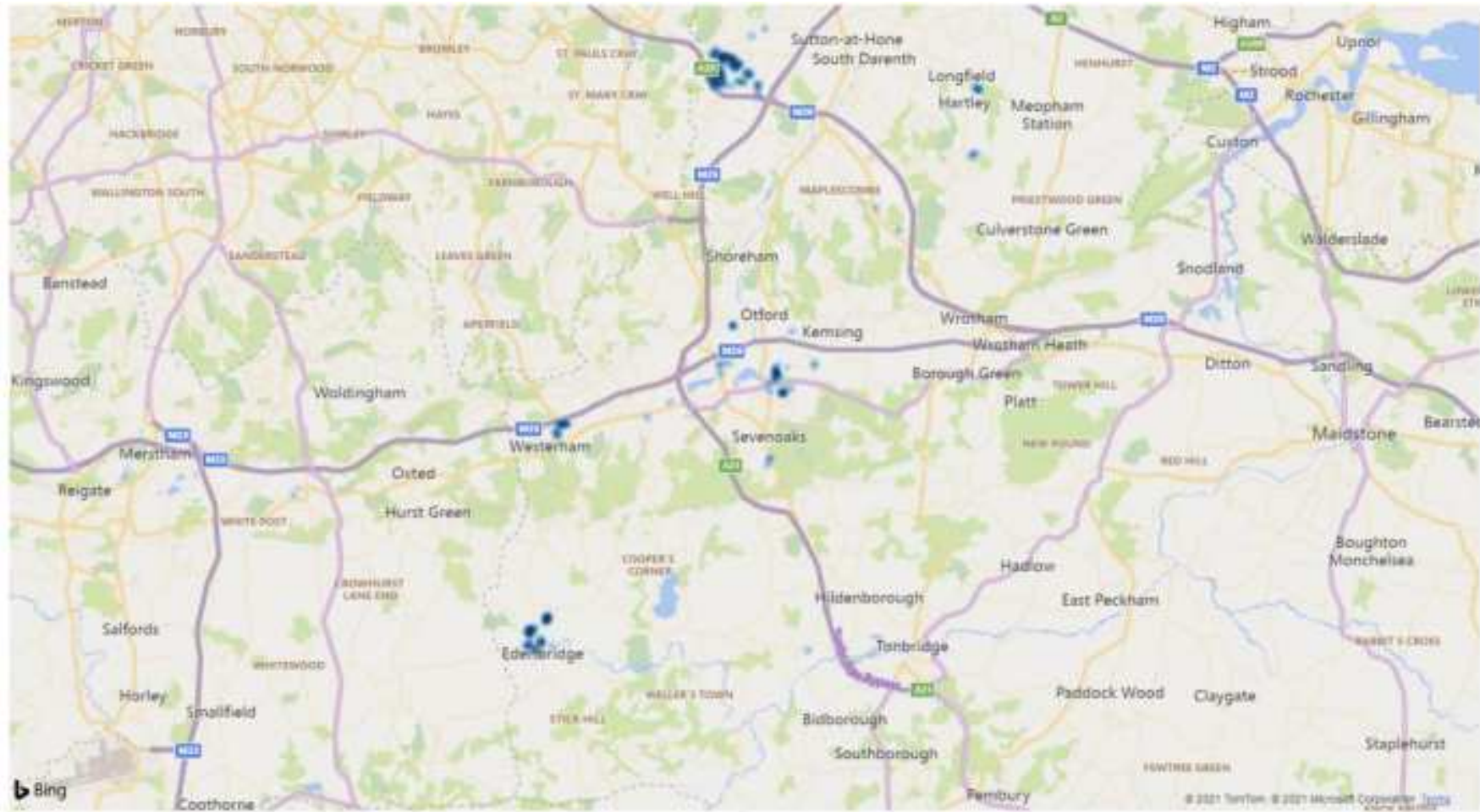
Broadband

- The average broadband speed per LSOA is 56.26Mbps, which is significantly lower than Kent (66Mbps).
- There is a clear divide between rural and urban LSOAs with urban LSOAs receiving an average broadband speed of 61.6Mbps and rural LSOAs receiving an average broadband speed of 49.3Mbps.
- The average proportion of households per LSOA with poor broadband is 0.5%, which is consistent with Kent (0.5%).

- **There are less digitally excluded populations in Sevenoaks as compared to Kent. However, broadband speeds could be a potential issue, particularly in rural areas.**
- **There are also disparities in digital inclusion across different areas in Sevenoaks.**
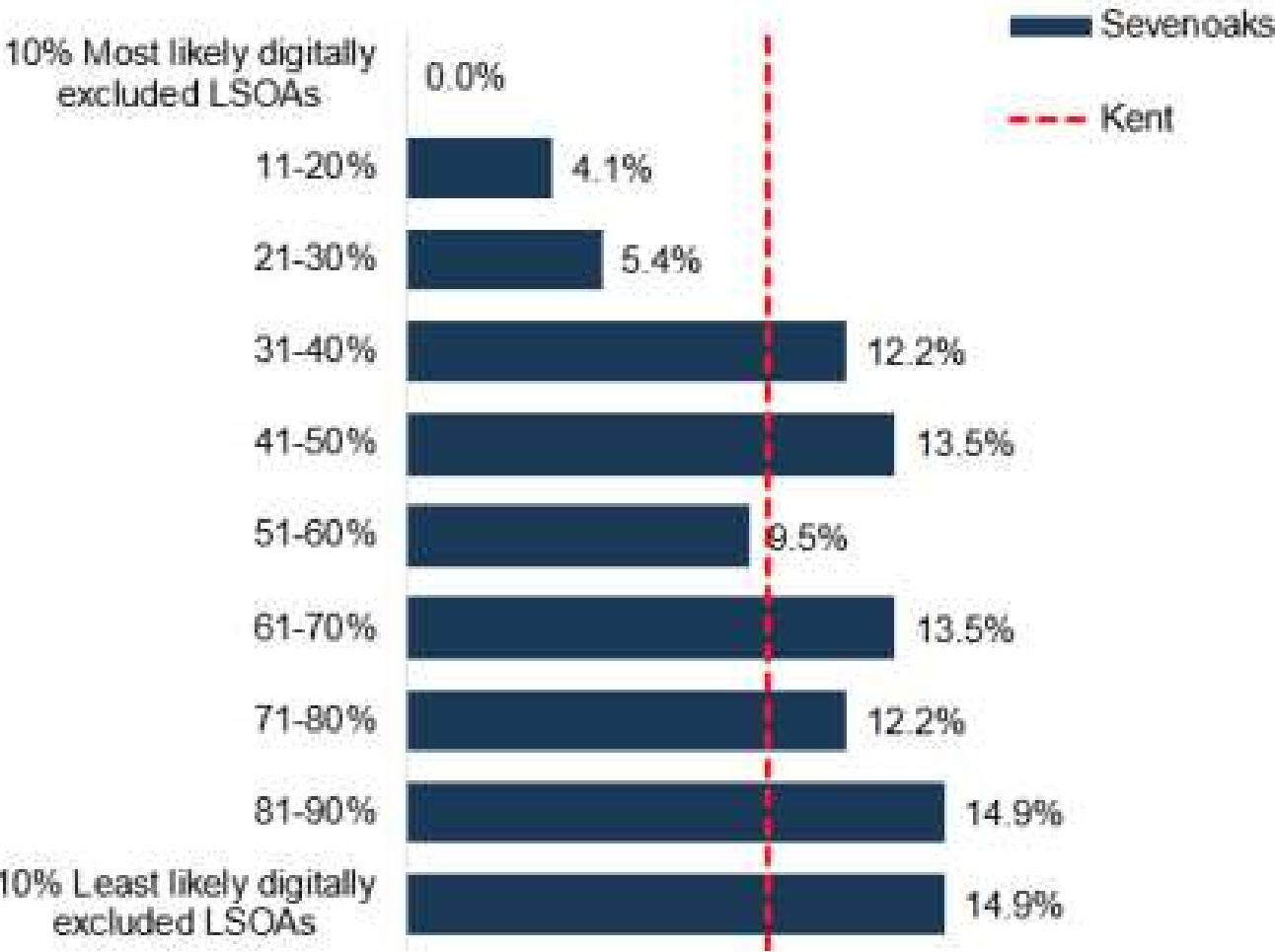
Household clusters – mature and older people

Household clusters – working age on low income

Proportion of LSOAs in Sevenoaks in each digital exclusion decile

Digital inclusion - actions

- Working with Sam Lain-Rose, KCC Digital Lead to understand Sevenoaks District digital exclusion profile and explore project and funding support.

- Secured £10k and match funding from WKHA to develop a partnership project with Compaid to support our customers with digital support needs through the provision of devices, data and training. A dedicated Digital Trainer has been appointed by Compaid and is supporting WKHA customers. This pilot project is due to end on 31 March 2022.

- Secured £79k funding to deliver a bespoke project in partnership with Compaid to support some of our most vulnerable homeless customers, who would like to be able to access online services (e.g. GP, addiction and mental health services, Universal Credit and other support net).

Digital inclusion - actions

- Submitted funding bids for over £1m to UK Community Renewal Fund and KCC Helping Hands towards a Community Hub project in Swanley to support 18-24 year NEETs, which includes a digital inclusion support element.
- Adopted as a priority for Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership and its Community Wellbeing Fund – 3 local projects have been supported and funded this year.
- Delivering digital training and information support in partnership with Compaid as part of Silver Sunday Week in October.
- Working with Kent County Council, who have been awarded funding to deliver Government's 'Project Gigabit' Programme aimed at improving local broadband connectivity to up to 122,000 premises across the county, notably rural areas.