



DIGITAL CUMBRIA – Connected, Capable and Creative: 2021 – 2026

**A Strategy
for Digital
Transformation**

CLEP

**CUMBRIA
LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP**

NORTHERN HM Government
POWERHOUSE



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Foreword

For too long rural areas have faced challenges in relation to digitalisation, ranging from connectivity challenges to modest progress in developing digital businesses.



However, in recent years Cumbria has made significant strides forward on digital connectivity, with an ambitious Digital Infrastructure Strategy developed by Cumbria County Council now in place and being implemented. This coupled with the accelerated pace of digitalisation as a result of the pandemic means that now is the time to take forward the digital transformation of Cumbria. This will make sure that all of our businesses, people and communities have fair and equal access to the digital agenda and all that it can offer, shrinking the geographical challenges that large, rural geographies can face, in terms of proximity and connectivity.

Government's recent announcements on Project Gigabyte and wider commitment to digitally enable the UK is important. Likewise, the digitalisation commitments in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal will support the development of the necessary infrastructure. These are critical as without these the wider ambitions within this strategy will not be delivered.

Cumbria's Digital Strategy aims to make Cumbria the rural destination of choice to live, work, visit and invest by ensuring that our excellent location is underpinned by a connected, capable and creative offer. Importantly, it will support economic and business recovery and move forward our three touchstone commitments to productivity; inclusive growth and net zero and help deliver government's ambition to levelling up at Cumbria, community and individual level.

I look forward to working with our partners to digitally transform Cumbria.

Lord Inglewood

Chair, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership





VISION

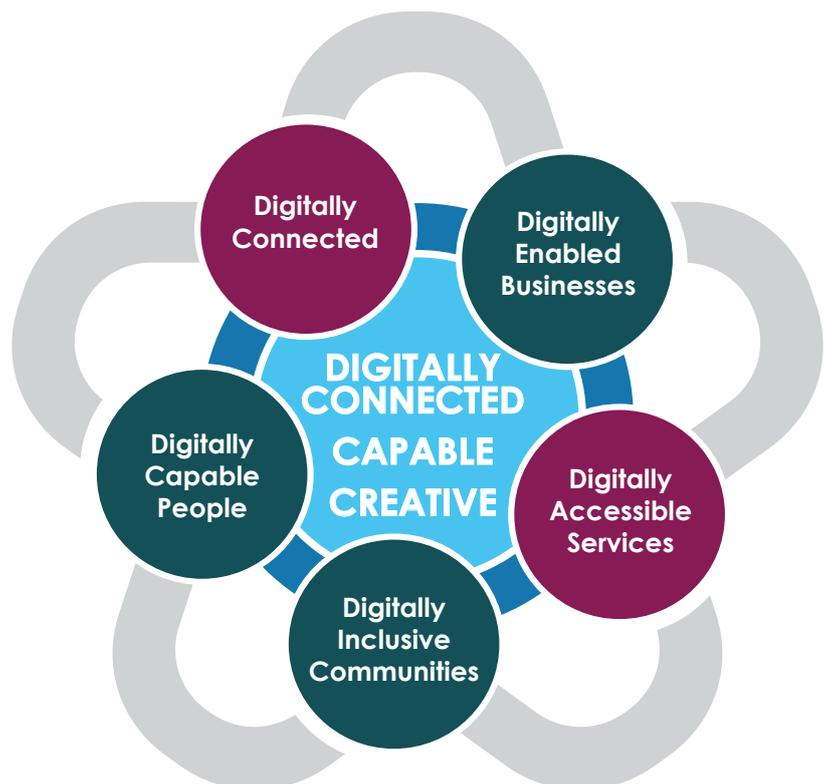
The 21st Century is arguably the 'Digital Age', with all aspects of life being transformed by technological developments, which were unimaginable even twenty years ago. This pace has been further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw a rapid take-up of digitalisation in every part of society - business, public life and home – in order to minimise the health impacts of the disease.

It is important that the digital gains secured during adversity are maximised and moved further forward so that Cumbria is genuinely digitally transformed. The vision is for Cumbria to be **'The place to live, work, visit and invest sustainably – where exceptional industry and innovation meets a breathtakingly beautiful and productive landscape'**. Digital transformation will enable this vision, people, businesses and investors will come if they have confidence that Cumbria is digitally connected, capable, and creative.

Cumbria is famed for its natural capital and beautiful landscapes, with the digital realm now bringing the world to Cumbria and Cumbria to the world. Importantly, it provides the opportunity to help deliver our ambition for inclusive growth, as those in more remote locations have the opportunity to fully engage in all aspects of life – business, employment, public services and social activities. In line with Cumbria's commitment to inclusive growth we have placed digital inclusivity at the heart of our strategy.

Cumbria has already made significant strides forward in moving forward the digital transformation, agenda, yet significantly more needs to be done if our ambition for Cumbria to be **'digitally connected, capable and creative'** is to be realised. There are five key themes that are fundamental to the achievement of this ambition:

- **Digitally Connected:** having the necessary infrastructure to ensure sufficient bandwidth and latency to provide reliable digital connectivity as outlined in Cumbria County Council's Digital Infrastructure Strategy.
- **Digitally Enabled Businesses:** making sure that all businesses have the opportunity to maximise the benefits of digitalisation for their business and Cumbria's creative industries are encouraged to flourish.
- **Digitally Capable People:** making sure that all of Cumbria's population have the necessary skills to allow them to actively engage with the digital agenda be that at foundation or highly specialised levels.
- **Digitally Accessible Services:** public services that are efficient, effective and meet the needs of service users.
- **Digitally Inclusive Communities:** making sure that all communities have digital access and that nobody is left behind by the 'digital divide'.





However, Cumbria LEP (CLEP) recognises that two of these themes – Digitally Connected and Digitally Accessible Services - are being advanced by specific strategies led by partner organisations across the public sector, Cumbria County Council has developed a Digital Infrastructure Strategy, which identifies the actions to be taken forward for Cumbria to have the appropriate full fibre and mobile infrastructure to ensure businesses and residents can be digitally connected. This can be accessed at <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/536/6487/44147115119.pdf>

The responsibility for digitally accessible services rests with individual public sector bodies and they must comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility regulations 2018. The aim is to ensure that website or mobile apps must be 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust' and providers must include an accessibility statement on their website.

Therefore, this strategy focuses on the themes of Digitally Creative Businesses; Digitally Capable People and Digitally Inclusive Communities.





ABOUT CUMBRIA

PLACE

Cumbria sits at the heart of the UK on a vital crossroads between England and Scotland, supporting critical north/south (M6/West Coast Mainline) and east/west links (A66 and A69).

It is the second largest county in England by land area. Its 6,767 square kilometres area covers half the land mass of the North West of England. It is also the most sparsely populated LEP area in England. Travelling across Cumbria can be challenging due to its mountainous topography as can the delivery of digital connectivity. All land over 3,000 feet in England is in Cumbria as are all 30 of its highest peaks.

The main centres of population are Barrow, Carlisle, Kendal, Penrith, Whitehaven and Workington, with Carlisle being the largest settlement followed by Barrow. Currently, 54% of Cumbria's 500,000 residents live in rural locations the second highest share of any LEP area in England.

Despite being a highly self-contained geography, with 96% of the population living and working in the county, some parts have more porous boundaries, including South Lakes/Barrow to North Lancashire and Northern Cumbria to Southern Scotland.

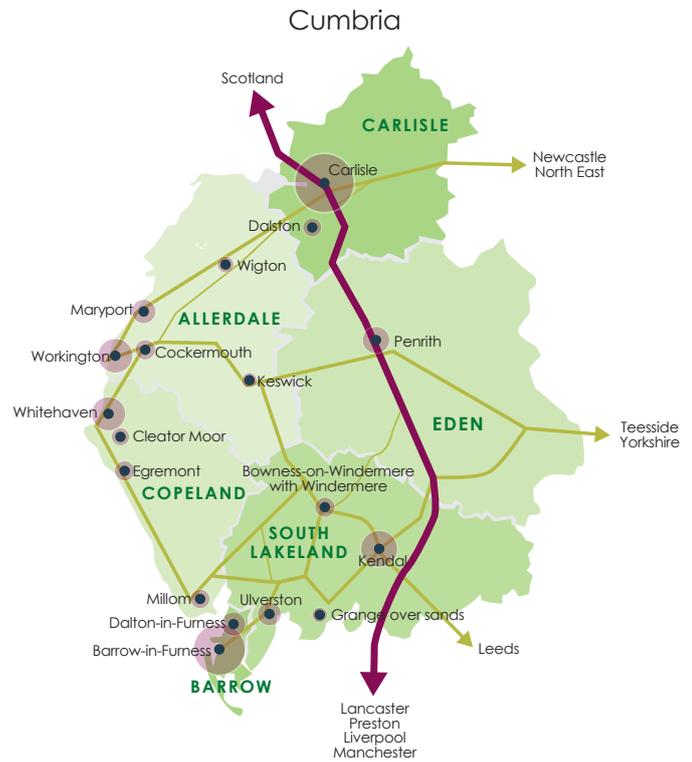
The area is also part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal geography between the UK and Scottish Governments, which have collectively committed £395 million of investment.

Cumbria has the most extensive coverage of protected landscapes, including the Lake District, large parts of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Cumbria benefits from a wealth of habitats and wildlife, and a mosaic of mountains, coastline, wetlands, rivers, lakes and woodlands.

There has been good progress in the roll out of superfast broadband helped by the Connecting Cumbria project. However this does not deliver the faster speeds increasing needed by businesses. In part because of Cumbria's rurality and its topography many business, workers and residents face a serious lack of high quality digital connectivity whether fixed (broadband) or mobile (4G). As of June 2020 59% of premises in the UK had access to ultrafast broadband, but only 14% in Cumbria, whilst as of September 2020 only 63% of premises had access to good 4G coverage from all four operators compared to 80% for the UK¹ and the coverage of geographical terms was even poorer.

PEOPLE

Cumbria has seen only very limited growth in population over the last 25 years (13,000 or 2.7%), with the population peaking in 2008 and falling slightly since then. The rest of the North West has seen stronger population growth (8%).



Area	Area sq. km	Population	Population Density	Population Density (Eng = 100)
England	130,310	55,977,200	430	100
Cumbria	6,767	498,900	74	17
Allerdale	1,242	97,500	79	18
Barrow	78	67,100	860	200
Carlisle	1,039	108,400	104	24
Copeland	732	68,400	93	22
Eden	2,142	52,900	25	6
South Lakeland	1,534	104,500	68	16

Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2018

¹ Ofcom "Connected Nation 2020" and associated data sets



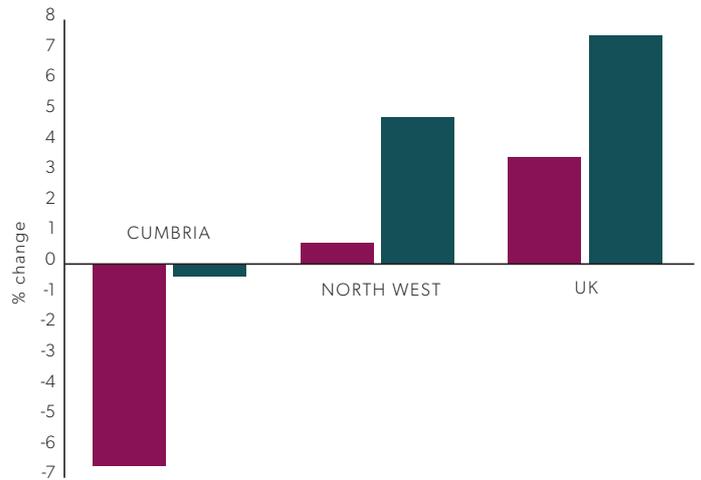


The latest (2018-based) official projections are for Cumbria's population to remain static at its current level. The number of young people aged 0-15 is projected to reduce by 8,000 by 2041, the greatest decrease in England.

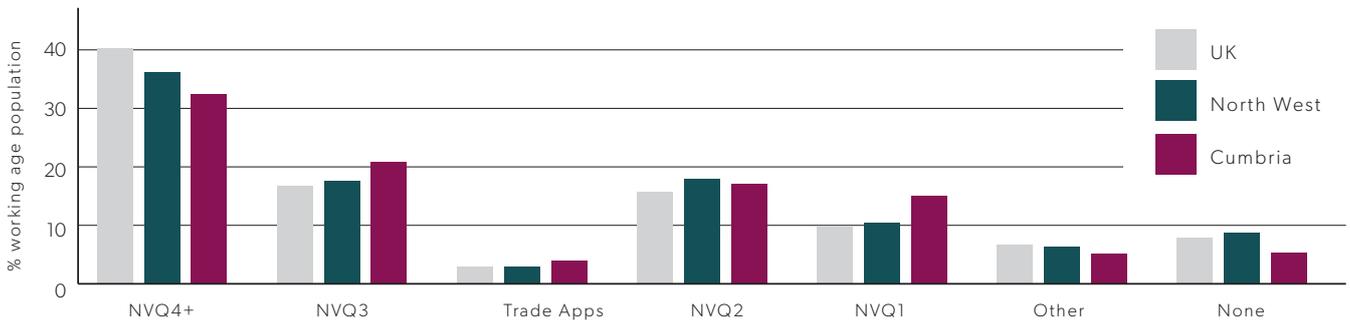
The working age population (16-64) is projected to fall by 6% (17,000) over the 10 years to 2031 and by 9% (26,000) over the 15 years to 2036. However, this could be offset by increases in economic activity rates for those over 60, particularly women. The overall available labour force is projected to fall by around 20,000 over the next 15 years in the absence of a change in current population trends.

Cumbria has a limited and thinly spread pool of people at the highest levels, with the smallest number of its working age population qualified to NVQ4 and above (i.e. degree level) of any LEP area in England. The county scores better on the proportion and numbers qualified to NVQ3, reflecting the shape of the economy and the importance of vocational training routes. Two areas – Barrow and Copeland – have some of the highest levels of apprenticeships per head of population in the country.

% population change 2008-2018



Highest qualification level of working age population, 2019

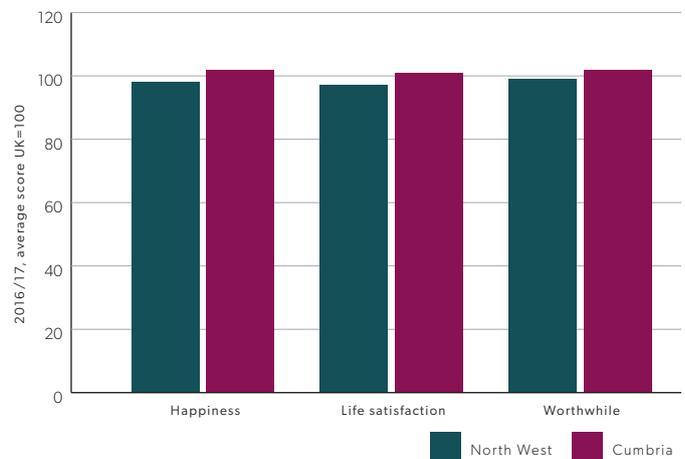


There are high levels of poverty and deprivation in Barrow and the urban areas of West Cumbria - but also significant pockets of deprivation in rural areas.

There are significant variations in life expectancy across the county – with life expectancy being 9.5 years lower for men and 8.0 years lower for women in the most deprived areas compared with the least deprived areas.

Historically, Cumbrian residents have outperformed the North West and been closer to UK norms on all economic measures related to people.

An important feature of Cumbria is the strength of its communities and the social cohesion in most of its settlements. This is reflected in measures of happiness, life satisfaction and the extent to which people describe their lives as worthwhile, which are consistently above national and regional average in Cumbria.





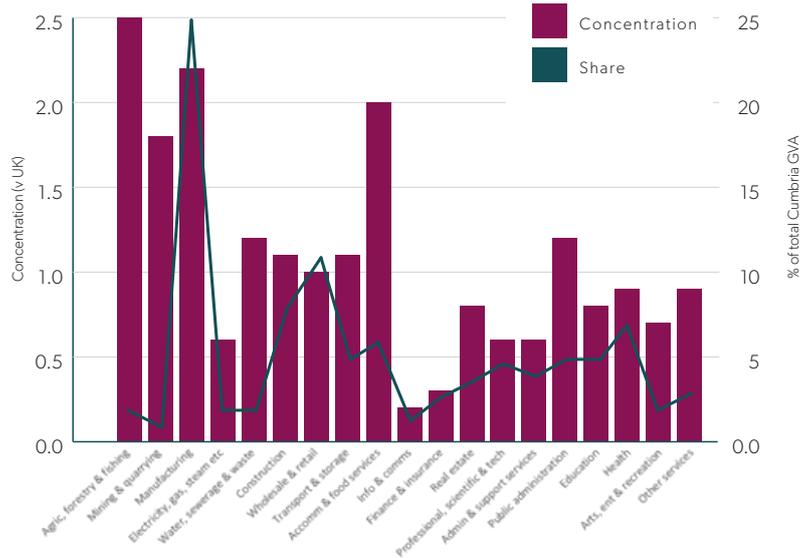
ECONOMY

Cumbria's £12 billion economy is unique in both a UK and international context, given its unusual structure. It has three key areas of strengths which distinguish it from other economies – advanced manufacturing, visitor economy and the rural economy. Alongside emerging strengths in clean energy, with Barrow hosting one of the world's largest offshore wind farms, Round 4 licensing off the west coast presenting significant further offshore opportunities and new nuclear opportunities in the pipeline. This is alongside the potential for hydrogen, battery, wave and tidal power.

The major concentration of manufacturing and engineering is focused in:

- Nuclear reprocessing, decommissioning, environmental management and associated engineering skills – with a £2 billion pa supply chain spend and national research bodies and university research.
- Nuclear submarine building – centre for £40 billion 'national endeavour' for Dreadnaught nuclear submarines.
- Assortment of advanced manufacturing activity in plastics, rubber, paper and engineering.
- Food manufacturing from large multi-nationals to artisan producers.

GVA Share and concentration by sector, 2017



The County's two largest employers Sellafield Ltd and BAE Submarine Systems operate within this sector.

Cumbria also has a major visitor economy, with 47 million visitors to Cumbria supporting around 8% of GVA, which rises to 11% to 12% when supply chains and other multiplier effects are taken into account.

Cumbria has also high degrees of concentration in the land-based industries (agriculture and forestry), with major concentrations of sheep, beef and dairy cattle and associated upstream (dairy, feedstuff etc.) and downstream (food processing) activity.

Many of our rural areas, especially in the Lake District National Park and parts of the North Pennines, are almost entirely dependent on the tourism economy and land based industries.

The mix of industries in Cumbria means that it tends not to follow the same trajectory as the national economy. Cumbria weathered the 2008 to 2012 recession much better than most areas, but GVA growth has dropped off since 2015.

Over the last two decades, average economic growth has been 1.6% pa compared to 1.9% pa for the UK/North West. A major reason for slower growth has been related to lower workforce growth than elsewhere.





DIGITALLY ENABLED BUSINESSES

PRESENT POSITION

The ONS publishes annual statistics on the exploitation of digital technology by UK businesses at a national level. However, there is little reliable data at regional or sub-regional level and as such there is a limited picture of the digital capability in businesses in Cumbria. We do know that on innovation more generally, Cumbria's performance on almost every measure is bottom quartile. Therefore, in order to understand existing capability, gaps within this, and to highlight good practice, an innovation mapping exercise is underway. This will provide comprehensive data on the number of businesses operating on the digital agenda, as well as the facilities and assets available to support the continued development and application of digital technologies. The outcomes from this mapping exercise will inform the targeting of initiatives to accelerate digital transformation throughout Cumbria.

Importantly, there is strong and growing evidence that the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have had a profound impact on the extent to which businesses and their workers are exploiting and relying on digital technologies – and this is likely to be as true in Cumbria, as elsewhere. This change will also accelerate the commitment to net zero as moving to digital platforms reduces the need to travel in a very large geography. The contribution to net zero will be explored in the delivery of priority actions. In summary:

- **Home-working at scale** – many businesses have delivered a step change in the extent to which employees are working from home, with the rapid growth in the use of tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams allowing ongoing interaction with business partners. The pace of shift has been extraordinary with videoconferencing now seen as the new normal. The Cumbria Business Survey (Oct/Nov/Dec 2020) recorded that around half of firms were using video-conferencing services for meetings, rising to four fifths for those employing more than 25 people.
- **Online services** - businesses 'pivoting' to offer online products and services, through click- and-collect or online booking and delivery options. Online platforms are increasingly the main form of trading, which presents a significant market opportunity for Cumbrian businesses to sell products to a much wider customer base. Covid-19 has accelerated this trend with the Business Survey reporting that 1 in 10 firms have introduced online bookings/payments and a third have increased their use as a result of Covid.
- **Productivity Improvements** – employers now know that employees working from home can be as productive as, or even more productive than, when they were in the office. There is also a significant reduction in travel time, which for a large geography, such as Cumbria presents a significant productivity gain.
- **Digital Healthcare** - has been accelerated, with patients able to book services online, attend digital consultations and share digital imagery with care providers. Helping to empower citizens to take charge of their own healthcare.
- **The Way We Live The Way We Work Now** – Businesses keen to attract highly skilled individuals can draw from a wider talent pool, as home and employment locations are de-coupled. The excellent quality of life offered in Cumbria will be attractive to many people, provided that adequate digital connectivity is available.





It is clear that these recent gains provide a strong platform on which to move forward the wider digitalisation of the business community. However, these significant gains have mainly affected those that work in an office environment and those providing retail and hospitality services. At this stage it is unclear as to how far the pandemic has accelerated digitalisation in other sectors and this needs to be better understood going forward.

MOVING FORWARD

The greatest gains in terms of productivity and business growth will be secured by mainstreaming digital transformation across the full business base and as such this is the primary objective of this strategy. However, there is also a need to increase digital and digitally based creative businesses within Cumbria, given the significance that these present to overall economic performance.

Digital Transformation will take different forms and offer different benefits to different businesses in different sectors of the Cumbrian economy. Digital transformation in all sectors will increase productivity, customer connectivity and satisfaction.

Digital transformation is likely to involve embracing the third industrial revolution, so-called 'Industry 3.0' and where appropriate shifts to 'Industry 4.0'. Industry 3.0 focuses on the adoption of computers and automation in order to enhance productivity. The fourth (4.0) revolution is developing what started in the third and enhances it with smart and autonomous systems driven by data, analytics and machine learning. Not every business will need to implement 4.0, many will be well served by more focused digitisation of parts of their business processes.

Cumbria has businesses that are well advanced along the journey to Industry 4.0. There will also be a significant number of businesses that have already taken their first steps into Industry 3.0. and could go further. A strategy to digitally transform Cumbria needs to recognise companies are at different stages of adopting digital technologies and will require inputs to fit their existing level of technology adoption. Many businesses will first choose to adopt technology that supports and enhances component parts of their business process including , for example, sales management, engineering design, integrated manufacturing or back-office functions. Then in time perhaps move to more fully integrated digitisation and automation if that offers further potential benefits.

Digital transformation is well established across the UK and beyond. As a result the necessary technology for the vast majority of Cumbria's future needs already exist and is widely deployed elsewhere. To accelerate the move to greater digitisation in Cumbria it will be necessary to increase awareness of this technology, how it is used, the benefits it delivers and help businesses connect with providers. In adopting such technology businesses with ambitions to go further, or progress to 4.0, need to ensure that their first islands of digitisation are compatible with and on the pathway to more fully integrated digitisation and automation.

As Cumbria's digital transformation gains pace this will encourage:

- technology providers to promote and make their offerings more readily available in Cumbria.
- local providers to be established.
- technology and service providers to see Cumbria as a better place to locate all or part of their business.

These developments will provide better career opportunities for appropriately skilled people to live and work in Cumbria, building on the skills development plans that are such an important part of this overall digital transformation strategy. They will also help ensure that the resources are available to support, especially smaller, businesses in Cumbria with IT set up and software implementation.

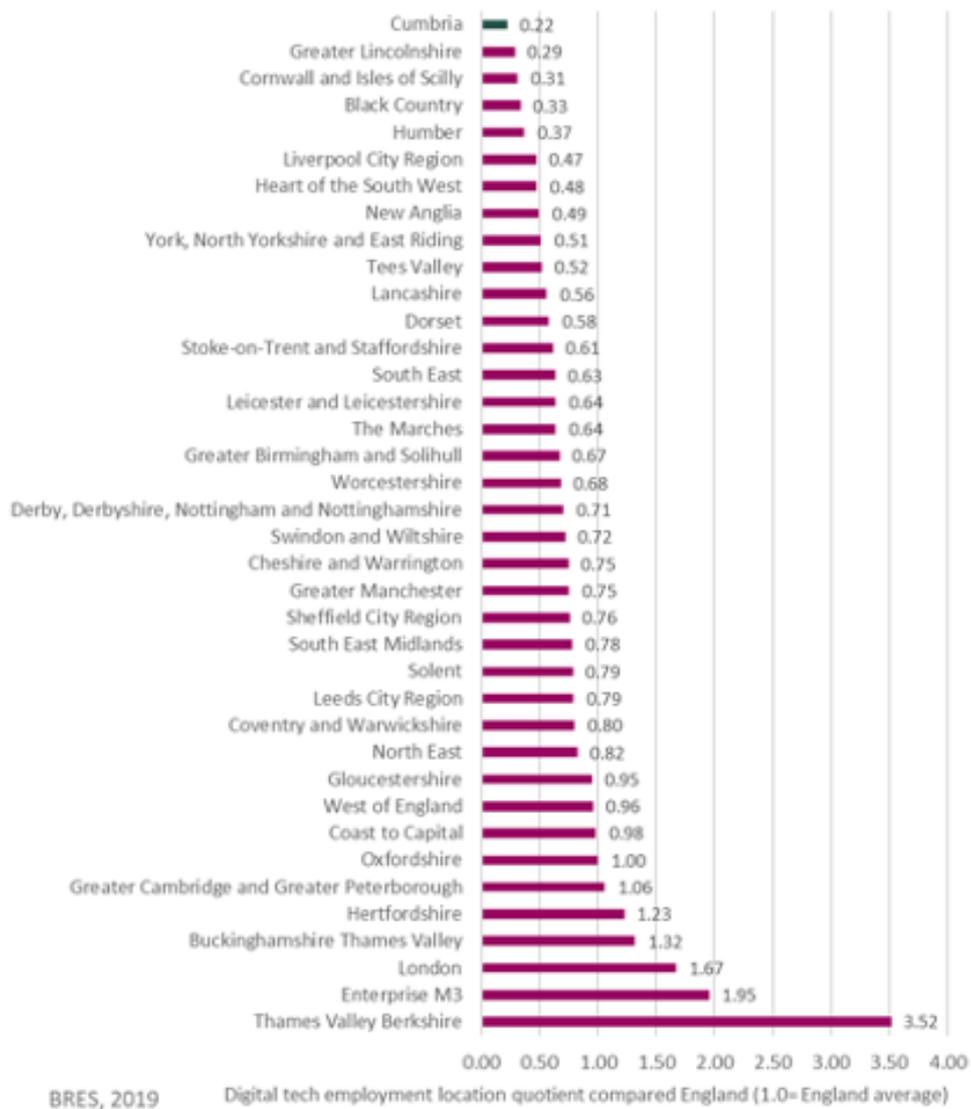




THE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Digital, as a sector in its own right - telecoms, computer programming, associated consultancy and services, including information technology (IT)- is currently under-represented in Cumbria. Analysis of the latest data from the Business Register and Employment Survey reveals that Cumbria has the lowest concentration of employment in the digital technology sector of any of the LEP areas in the country, with a Location Quotient of just 0.22, where 1.0 is the GB average (1,800 jobs). This is low, relative even to other predominantly rural LEP areas. Even taking a broader definition of the digital sector as used by DCMS¹, the relative concentration represented by the 3,900 jobs is still just 0.34 compared to the GB average (the second lowest of any LEP area). There are of course important digital skills and activities that take place in Cumbria in our engineering, manufacturing and service sectors firms that are not fully captured in this data² nevertheless the broad picture of relative underrepresentation in the digital sector is valid.

Relative concentration of digital technology sector jobs



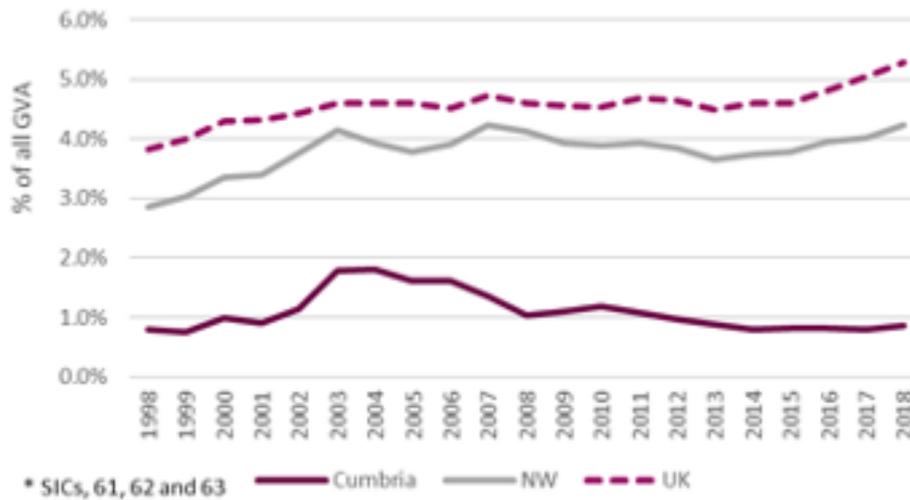
Source: ONS, BRES, 2019 (SICs, 61-63)

1. Which includes: 26 Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products; 58 Publishing activities; 59 Motion picture, video and TV programme production; 60 Programming and broadcasting activities; 61 Telecommunications; 62 Computer programming and consultancy; and 63 Information service activities
2. Such as The Idol fin tech firm based in Penrith and the use of virtual reality software in the nuclear sector by REACT Engineering, based in Cleator Moor, and Createc, based in Cockermouth





Digital technology & telecomms sectors



Furthermore, the share of digital businesses in Cumbria's Gross Value Added (GVA) has declined over the last several years, whereas the sector has seen solid growth in its share of GVA at a national level. The chart above for the sector, covering SIC Codes 61 to 63, which is derived from the latest ONS data on sub-regional GVA.

This evidence is concerning on two counts. Cumbria is currently largely missing out on the economic growth being generated in the digital sector, one of the UK's most promising and rapidly growing industries. There are also important crossovers between the digital sector and other industries, for example in providing digital skills that can be accessed by other industries (e.g. manufacturers looking to recruit IT and software specialists), as well as in providing hardware, software and services to help local businesses digitalise their operations. An under-weight digital sector is therefore likely to constrain the rate at which other Cumbrian industries can exploit digital technology.

AVAILABLE SUPPORT

Across the North, the NP11 has identified digital as an important underpinning theme for the four priorities of Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Life Sciences & Health and Digital itself.

At North West level, the Made Smarter programme helps manufacturers develop their competitive edge, with assistance in the application of digital tools that help improve efficiency and business. Made Smarter helps businesses identify the right digital tools and advise how to use them to make improvements to their business.

In Cumbria support is available to businesses through the Cumbria Business Growth Hub, which provides free at source advice to businesses; the Digital Cumbria ERDF-funded project, which offers up to £5,000 consultancy support to SMEs to support digital adoption; Evolve Digital to support small family businesses to embrace digital technologies; Made Smarter Cumbria Manufacturing Service designed to help SME manufacturers to streamline their processes, drive up production capacity, improve business systems and access new markets, with nearly half of applicants applying for digitally-enabled technologies to support their business operations and performance.





There are also examples of leading edge activities across the county, which demonstrate that Cumbria has the potential to innovate in the digital arena. These include the School of Remote and Rural Medicine, which is looking at establishing innovative, technology based health provision; and the DCMS-funded 5G Rural Integrated Testbed delivered by Cybermoor in Alston, which includes augmented reality tourism, flying drones beyond visual line of sight, and counting sheep using artificial intelligence and drones.

At national level government has identified a series of policies and programmes to ensure that the UK is at the forefront of more advanced capabilities including artificial intelligence and data analytics, in line with its commitment in the national Industrial strategy. This includes the DCMS funding of Tech Nation, which is focused on championing and facilitating the growth of digital tech businesses; and Innovate UK's programmes, some of which involve digital aspects, including smart systems, robotic inspection; cyber security and e-commerce.

There is therefore an extensive platform to build upon and the focus is therefore on identifying those activities that will deliver genuine transformation and accelerate the digital enablement of Cumbria's businesses.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

At headline level there are three objectives, which are simple yet challenging, given the current baseline position and the resource available to commit to this activity:

- **Digitally Enabling Cumbrian Businesses** - across all sectors of the economy – to improve productivity, better connect with customers, access new markets and grow more rapidly.
- **Securing Additional Investment and Resource** - to provide businesses with the awareness and support necessary to adapt and take advantage of technology to grow their business and deliver productivity gains.
- **Growing Cumbria's Digital Sector**, including IT services and software, to address the current relatively low levels of businesses and employment in Cumbria in one of the UK's fastest growing sectors.
- **Accelerating the use of digital** throughout Cumbria's acclaimed cultural and arts sector to ensure that Cumbria's STEAM ambition is delivered.
- **Develop exemplar projects in artificial intelligence** - building on Cumbria's world leading expertise in advanced manufacturing and clean energy.

In addition to the headline objectives the following actions will be prioritised:

- **Complete a Digital Take-Up Mapping Exercise** – sector by sector to identify the pace of take up and opportunities for acceleration.
- **Developing an Investment and Advice Map** – to ensure that businesses are aware of the capabilities and support available to help them move forward their digitalisation objectives.
- **Reboot the 'Your Future' campaign** - to attract high-skilled employees to live and work from home in Cumbria, given the rapid acceleration of home-working.
- **Facilitate sharing experience and best practice** between members of the LEP's Strategy Groups and Sector Panels will be helpful as well as engaging with the wider business community.
- Successful digital transformation will require both **increasing awareness of appropriate digital technology** and, most importantly, **encouraging companies to invest** in reviewing their business processes and implementing appropriate digital technology.
- **Identify Suitable Digital Start Up and Hub space** - campaign to attract more digital technology and creative industries to Cumbria, by providing more premises for digital hubs, which are aligned to opportunity and need.
- **Highlight Cumbria's digital success stories** – to promote take up by other businesses including through engagement with high profile national initiatives such as Tech Nation.





DIGITALLY CAPABLE PEOPLE

CURRENT POSITION

Improving digital skills at every level is imperative for an economy to thrive in the digital age. This spans inclusivity, so that people can access digital applications in everyday life, through to higher-end skills, so that a talented workforce can both apply existing and introduce new digital applications and techniques to business operations and drive revenue and margin in firms. All sectors in the economy are becoming more digitally focused, and this has been accelerated by changes to working patterns as a result of Coronavirus as well as shifts in retail and other sectors to more blended and digitally rich business models. As a result, all businesses have increasing needs and pressure to employ a more digitally enabled workforce. The workforce of the near future will need to have much greater digital literacy and fluency. A digital sector also requires a dynamic pool of talented and skilled staff and entrepreneurs to start-up and scale-up new digital enterprises and propel Cumbria's economy forward.

At the same time, many jobs and occupations are changing as automation and digital technologies such as AI reduce the proportion of jobs requiring repetitive manual work and clerical processing. Individuals in the workforce who learned their trades and occupations before the 2000s, when digital began to make real inroads into how businesses operated, have needed to learn on the job or are at risk of having obsolete skills. In addition, new digital approaches and technologies are being adopted and refined in business. As a result, there is a huge need for reskilling employees to develop digital skills. There is also a need for constant upskilling of employees as businesses embrace, develop and refine their digital capabilities.

Employers need entry-level employees to have a high level of digital literacy, with many younger workers now entering the labour market with digital skills acquired at school, which can be used in the workplace. However, not all school leavers are sufficiently prepared for working in the digitalised economy, either because they suffer from weaker literacy and numeracy or because their school did not have the capability to develop sufficient digital skills. There is a need to ensure that all school leavers have the requisite digital skills and capability to succeed in tomorrow's data-driven economy. In fact, over 80% of high skilled jobs advertised on-line require high level, specific digital skills and whilst entry level digital skills will help in securing employment it is high level, specific digital skills that will build a career.

The primary area where there is a deficit of digital skills is at intermediate and senior management levels, where new digitally driven business models require executives and managers with digital capability. For many intermediate skills, jobs have changed rapidly as software, control systems, automation and AI have routinised repetitive tasks. Both intermediate and senior management are most likely the area levels where impact is likely to be greatest, with higher and degree level skills therefore the priority gap for businesses.

Currently, 31% of Cumbria's workforce is qualified to higher level qualification (NVQ 4) or above, basically around 90,000 people. This is amongst the smallest in absolute and relative terms in comparison with almost every other LEP area in the country. The Digital Transformation agenda therefore needs to help drive forward the skills and training agenda. Rural areas can suffer a triple effect from the digital divide, with worse broadband connectivity, lower skills and fewer digital technology/creative industries. Developing digitally capable people is therefore equally important





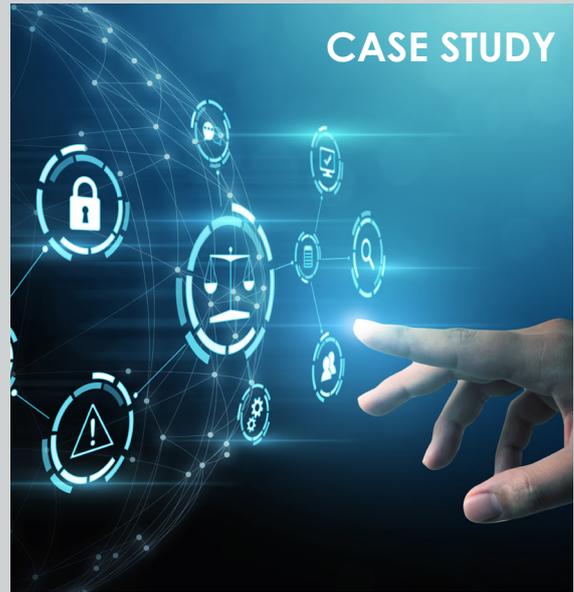
as improving digital infrastructure and take up in business.

Productivity in the digital sector is lower than the national average, as are employment levels and GVA per job across Cumbria. This is partly as a feature of Cumbria's economic structure, which has fewer high GVA sectors than other economies. Digital applications can drive efficiencies in all sectors. DCMS suggests that 21% of adults in the UK lack one of the five basic digital skills, with 8% of adults lacking more than one. The digital skills deficit is likely to be greatest in those disadvantaged areas where access to digital technology is more limited. The National Cyber Security Strategy identifies insufficient training and skills as a key vulnerability, suggesting that cyber-security skills need to be extended into every profession.

The declining population and shrinking working-age population in Cumbria is another structural challenge where digital can offer practical solutions. The 20,000 (6%) decline in working-age population in Cumbria since 2010, together with a projected further decline of 16 to 64 years old by 44,000 by 2036, some 15% of the entire workforce will further exacerbate the skills and talent challenge. Digital Transformation provides the opportunity for companies based in Cumbria to be able to recruit for the roles that they need to survive and grow, now that home based working has taken hold. In terms of replacement demand in the economy, there are over 10,000 jobs each year that need to be replaced and the majority of these will require digitally capable people.

Digital can also overcome a number of practical labour market challenges in Cumbria, including travel-to-work distances east-west as well as north-south. It can also provide productive home working solutions for employers and employees. Research led by BT into providing a smart, rural network identifies that "the divide between rural and urban areas in the adoption of superfast broadband, whilst declining, still exists. The potential to increase the provision of digital skills training, specifically for businesses and other organisations... [is especially relevant in rural areas]".

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the skills system to develop innovative methods of providing skills support in Cumbria. Digital up-skilling needs to work with and through the education and skills sector to deliver high-quality provision. This aligns with CLEP's ambition to make the best use of all of our people's talents and to develop skills across Cumbria.



Centre for Digital Transformation

Outline

OVERVIEW

The Centre for Digital Transformation will create a resource and centre of expertise in digital learning, technologies and capabilities for the University of Cumbria, its staff, students and stakeholders. The Centre (CDT) will have an internal focus on building digital capability across the University and on creating a learning offer that is informed, driven and delivered by digital opportunities. The CDT will also have an external focus on enhancing the digital capabilities of individuals, businesses and communities.

Overall, the CDT will ensure the University is a digital organisation, able to thrive in a virtual world of data and information technologies that drives an increasing proportion of economic activity and social interaction. This will mean that the University will be better prepared to:

- Offer online teaching and learning opportunities
- Create the internal infrastructure to deliver business processes and services digitally
- And enable people, communities and business to cope, thrive and develop in the digital world.

SUMMARY VISION

The Centre will become a regional resource to make the Borderlands and Cumbria more digitally enabled and capable.





GLOBAL DIGITAL AND TECH. TRENDS

The emerging technologies and real drivers in digital innovation are in the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Internet of Things, Blockchain and Cybersecurity. Of these, AI is the dominant focus for investment. This has a number of implications for Cumbria, as if it can develop a standalone digital sector then the focus needs to be in these areas. Also, across all business sectors, the ability to innovate business processes by using these developing digital applications will help to drive competitiveness. A digitally capable workforce will be key to achieving this.

CLEP PEOPLE, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY GROUP

CLEP is committed to nurturing talent, growing and retaining higher-level skills, creating a skilled workforce for the future, developing leadership and management capabilities, addressing worklessness and providing young people with promising careers in Cumbria. These objectives will be delivered in partnership with a range of skills and education providers and other agencies.

On 6 March 2020 CLEP's People, Employment and Skills Strategy Group (PESSG) approved an approach to enhancing the digital skills offer across the Count and committed to creating and supporting a long-term partnership between industry that co-creates a curriculum that meets industry supply and expectation, secures support to guarantee the quality of delivery and minimises any gap between the digital skills taught and the digital skills needed by:

- Digitally excluded residents
- Young people to build on their digital skills
- Unemployed residents to bring them closer to the labour market
- Employees to enable them to progress in their career
- Employees to enable them to adapt to the rapid changes in the work environment brought about by digital technology
- Senior leaders to enable their organisations to take advantage of the opportunities presented by digital technology

CASE STUDY

It will have an internal aim of transforming the University's digital capability, creating new forms of and approaches to learning and creating a portfolio of courses and a student experience that is digitally grounded and enabled.

Our vision is that all university courses will be digital, either in entirety or in aspects, and that the University will be a digital organisation, in terms of how it operates and what it offers.

The Centre will have an external objective of building more digital businesses and communities, and developing the digital skills and know-how of people in the Borderlands and Cumbria.

Our vision is that the Centre will enable people, businesses and communities across the Borderlands and Cumbria to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

ALIGNMENT WITH AND CONTRIBUTION TO CITADELS

The vision for the Centre is closely aligned with the Citadels project. This is a major institutional transformation opportunity, which would enable the University to establish itself at the heart of the Borderlands as a Higher Education Institution and key anchor institution for producing, graduates, high level skills, research and enterprise, and knowledge exchange.

The CDT provides enhanced digital capability for the University to extend its reach across the geographically and populated dispersed Borderlands region. Given the economic and demographic dispersion that characterises Borderlands, a digital engagement plan will be essential to overcome the travel distances and small size of many communities. A 'bricks and mortar' approach would be expensive – as it would require physical nodes in many communities – and would be very challenging to operate. An online University presence allows entry into households and communities through mobile devices, laptops and desktop PCs. It also provides access to businesses in rural areas and communities across the entire span of the North of England and Southern Scotland.





In delivering these goals the PESSG would utilise the framework for digital skills support developed by the digital policy centre, Readie and innovation foundation, NESTA. The framework can be used to identify gaps in support and develop responses to meet needs. The key components of the framework are set out below:

Labour Market Fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills Forecasting - utilising labour market data and intelligence to ensure skills learned are relevant• Curriculum Development - regular evaluation and update of the curriculum to reflect the rate of change for digital technology
Learner Fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pathway Guidance - Support people to choose training that matches ambitions and the needs of the labour market• Assessment - support learners to identify the skills they have and the gaps in their skills
Delivery Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding - Identify financial support and incentives for learners and businesses• Wraparound Support - Support to motivate learners to begin and complete their training• Training Delivery - Provide access to high quality training through flexible delivery methods
Career Passport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accreditation - Skills development is recognised through third party recognition that gives learners and employers confidence in the relevance of their skills• Career Support - Support learners to find the skills support they need and highlight the career opportunities available

The framework suggests that LEP Sector Panels can play a critical role in establishing details of the demand for digital skills which will be a critical aspect of a co-designed curriculum that meets labour market and learner needs.

The feedback received from sector panels and other aspects of the LEP network to date supports enhancements to the digital skills offer in high level, specific digital skills and has identified a number of areas for development including:

- digital design
- digital tools for innovation
- data analysis
- insight visualisation
- simulation
- automation
- artificial intelligence
- data capture
- data manipulation
- data storage
- data curation
- Cloud-based development, mapping and management
- Coding and
- Cyber-security.





DIGITAL SKILLS SUPPORT

The demand for digital skills is significant and growing. The Government has recognised this and has developed a range of strategies and initiatives to support the development of digital skills, including:

- **Digital Bootcamps** - This training will enable individuals to retrain, update or formalise skills or to acquire specialist skills at levels 3-5 or equivalent, and will include an offer for coding, software development, cloud computing, cyber security, digital marketing, data analytics, digital for advanced manufacturing, digital for healthcare.
- **Digital Skills Partnerships** - communicating the need for digital skills, support schools in delivering digital skills across the curriculum, establish support for digital enterprise and bring national coherence to digital skills support.
- **Cyber skills strategy** – supporting embedding cyber security in the curriculum , Encouraging employers to clearly articulate their needs and train employees, establish a schools programme to create a step change in specialist cyber security education (Cyber First), creating higher and degree-level apprenticeships, support the accreditation of teacher professional development in cyber security and embed cyber security and digital skills as an integral an integral part of relevant courses across the education system.
- **Institute of Technology (IoT)** - IoTs will spearhead the delivery of higher technical education in STEM subjects, bringing together employers with FE Colleges and Universities in the development and delivery of a curriculum focused on technical skills that include high level, specific digital skills particularly at Levels 4 & 5.

These initiatives offer the opportunity to build on the range of provision that current exists across the Cumbrian skills system.

DIGITAL SKILLS IN SCHOOLS

Schools are delivering a curriculum geared directly towards digital and tech as well as broader skills across Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects that are vital for people to develop the capabilities and understanding to work in technology. The National Centre for Computing Education delivers support for primary and secondary schools in the teaching of computer science, the Centre has established a hub for schools in the North East and Cumbria and are working with Cumbria Careers Hub.

Examples of projects developed across Cumbria include:

- **Queen Elizabeth Studio School** – a Digital Creatives programme enabling young people to engage in projects to develop an understanding of careers across the sector.
- **First Lego League** – Cumbria Careers Hub has sponsored the First Lego League project for 2020. The project engages students in robotic and digital skills challenges.





DIGITAL IN FURTHER EDUCATION

Cumbria's Further Education Colleges and other FE providers will be at the forefront of the county's digital transformation and already provide a range of programmes to support the development of digital skills within Cumbria. These include a range of programme for specific digital skills including Games Design, Computing, Computer Science, Digital Skills and Digital Technology (Network and Cyber Security) and Infrastructure Technicians.

The PESSG has supported the development of a Stage 2 proposal for a Cumbria Institute of Technology to support digital skills development in the Health and Advanced Manufacturing sectors. Led by Furness College and involving a partnership of major employers and the skills system in Cumbria, the proposal has been submitted to Department for Education for review. If successful, the IoT will be in the vanguard of the county's capability to deliver high level, specific digital skills.

Digital T Level is a bespoke focus from September 2020, with a pathway in Digital Production Design and Development. This will be followed next year by Digital Business Services and Digital Support and Services. The Cumbrian Further Education sector is at the forefront of T Level delivery

Other examples of current best practice include:

- Energen, working in partnership with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, established a cyber security lab in 2018, supporting the delivery of cyber security graduates, Apprentices and CyberFirst programmes.
- Apprenticeships – whilst the Apprenticeship offer in specific digital roles is limited the number of starts has doubled over the last 3 years. Apprenticeship offered through FE Colleges and providers such as GEN2 and SP Training include data analyst apprenticeships and infrastructure technician apprenticeships.
- The Edge Project, a skills support for the workforce project funded through ESF, supports employers with digital skills including data analyst, e-safety, digital marketing and software development. The project has also supported the development of a new level 3 curriculum for Digital Skills.
- The community learning and skills offer across Cumbria also includes digital skills support and the Good Things Foundation, with 15 on-line centres across Cumbria, provides training for people lacking basic digital skills. The foundation has developed courses in partnership with organisations such as NHS and National Careers Service and is linked to the Future Digital Inclusion Programme developed by Department for Education.

DIGITAL IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Skills Advisory Panel for Cumbria has identified the continued development of the higher-level skills offer as a priority within the Local Skills Report for 2021. The Skills Advisory Panel will work with Higher and Further Education institutions to support the development and extension of the higher-level digital skills offer. This has included:





- The development of an expression of interest for an Institute of Technology, led by Furness College with University of Cumbria as the Higher Education partner – the proposal will establish a network of facilities across the county for the Healthcare and Manufacturing sectors, with digital skills support a key element of the curriculum.
- The development of a digital accelerator project within the Workington Town Deal to support industry specific higher level digital skills.
- Contributing to emerging programme development for digital bootcamps which will innovative delivery of digital skills across the county.

Cumbria is also playing its full part in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal providing strategic investment proposals related to digital infrastructure, renewable energy, place-making, better business premises, enhancing the higher education offer and knowledge exchange. As part of this project the University of Cumbria is establishing a Centre for Digital Transformation as a key dimension of Citadels project and also as a means to develop a more digital education offer and organisation. The Centre has an externally-focused role working with individuals, businesses and communities to build digital expertise and know-how. This will help deliver the higher level digital skills and capability that will enable businesses to succeed by embracing and development digitally-driven business models.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The PESSG, in its role as the Skills Advisory Panel for Cumbria, will take the lead on the development of local skills priorities, based on analysis of provision and intelligence secured through the PESSG and sector panels. The priorities, along with supporting analysis, will be set out in the Cumbria Local Skills Report to be produced by March 2021.

The PESSG has set out the need to develop high quality, co-ordinated digital skills provision that address digital exclusion, enables employers to recruit suitably skilled staff and provides employees to develop the digital skills that are needed to progress their career. This will build on the current offer and include the work of the Cumbria Careers Hub.

Enhancing digital skills is fundamental to help position Cumbria within the digital skills revolution and drive innovation in firms and across the Cumbrian economy. This can only be done through the creation of a long-term partnership between industry, to co-create a curriculum that meets commercial demand, provides quality delivery, and addresses any gap between the digital skills taught and the digital skills needed.

Improvements to digital skills will be achieved through collaborative engagement, with employers setting out their needs and the skills system developing a response that is flexible and appropriate to business needs. The speed of technological change can make specific digital skills out of date, competency and capabilities are key to remaining current to emerging technology.

Developing digital talent is essential for Cumbrian businesses and organisations to be able to respond to digital disruption and changing demand. This expansion demand driven by digital will create new jobs and these will be for higher levels of qualifications and skills in technical, professional and managerial occupations that also offer higher salaries and generate economic growth.





The headline objectives are to:

- Support the development of a high-quality education, skills and training offer that develops more digitally capable people, that is both responsive to and is focused on the needs of the employers and the wider economy, and also develops new digital knowledge and expertise that can stimulate innovation and economic growth.
- Continue to promote digital as both a specialism and a career option, especially but not only for young people.
- Continue to encourage lifelong learning, including the uptake of basic digital skills, for those unable to use technology.

In addition to the headline objectives the following actions will be prioritised:

- Support improving the adaptability of the workforce to future changes – by developing digital capability through the development of digitally-focused programmes and courses, and by developing an upskilling and reskilling plan for digital.
- Support the capacity of schools to nurture and develop children's digital capabilities - through formal education by embracing technology and encouraging its use in the classroom. Deliver targeted school-business engagement activities focused on the STEM requirements of future employers.
- Enable educationalists to be digitally enabled - promote school involvement in ensure schools are plugged into the leading digital networks and have resources to access appropriate digital equipment and software to enable pupils to learn with the latest digital applications.
- Continue to align the FE Curriculum with business needs - FE colleges to deliver curriculum and content that is relevant to employers needs and emerging trends in the digital sector.
- Support the continuing development of a more digitally focussed Higher Education provision that creates outstanding digital capability in graduates, employees and lifelong learners- to develop its digital offer.
- Continue to support the delivery of digital education and skills-based training to older all people who need or want to become more digitally capable – focusing on those who are not sufficiently digitally capable to ensure that they are not excluded from digital transactions and benefits in day-to-day life.
- Embed digital in the sector-led skills plans – ensuring that the specific challenges and opportunities are addressed.
- Lead engagement with <https://digileaders.com/> - to help sectoral leaders to collaborate professionally and leverage technology to drive economic growth.





DIGITALLY INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

CURRENT POSITION

Digital inclusion is defined by central government as “having the right access, skills, motivation and trust to confidently go online”. It is a fundamental aspect of the UK’s Digital Strategy. One in 10 adults have never used the internet, with the position in Cumbria reflecting this, as 10% of people had not been online in the first quarter of 2019, according to ONS. This means that basic digital skills, connectivity and access to digital devices are all important cornerstones in improving digital inclusiveness. It is predicted that 90% of all jobs will require digital skills by 2040. Worklessness can be perpetuated by a lack of digital skills, with unemployment being a further contributor to economic and social exclusion. Across Cumbria there are 25,000 workless households, which equates to just over 15% of all households.

It is fundamental for basic service provision to ensure that people are not excluded by a lack of access to digital skills or technology. This can manifest itself in the most basic of economic activities such as making a cheaper advanced booking for travel. The digitally excluded are more often financially penalised through higher prices, less flexibility, lack of access to real-time information, digital interaction and customer reward programmes.

In the public sector, it is crucial to recognise that those most marginalised by not being connected online, via smart devices or with data or coverage are not left behind by a drive to digitalise public services, as this will lead to further marginalisation. Digital provision that works effectively and equitably is a potential game-changer for those marginalised from economic opportunities and public services.

Connecting Cumbria’s rollout of superfast broadband has made a significant improvement to Cumbria’s connectivity. However, some 6% of premises are still without access to superfast broadband of at least 30Mbps download, with Eden and parts of the National Parks significantly less well served. For example, 16% of premises in the Lake District National Park are not served by superfast broadband. Coverage of ultra-fast broadband .at >300Mbps is low across most of Cumbria with the exception of Carlisle. This is a clear challenge to be addressed to encourage digital growth in Cumbria.

Lessons can be learnt from the activities of the Digital Skills Partnerships trailblazers from LEAs in Lancashire and the South West, which have been engaged. There is also good practice emerging from the £1million digital skills innovation fund, open to LEAs to improve digital inclusivity.

Digital inclusion, as a cross-cutting theme is prevalent in service, technological and market developments. Digital exclusion is most likely to be apparent through exclusion from fixed and mobile coverage, basic digital skills and be exacerbated by age and income profiles.





PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The objective is to drive inclusion through digital channels, including by deploying infrastructure and skills training to enable all residents who want to have digital access to do so.

There is a strong correlation between digital exclusion and social exclusion, as it impacts disproportionately on marginalised communities, low-income groups and the elderly population.

Digital can drive the 'levelling-up' agenda. Digital is also a societal leveller, it provides ways to democratise and innovative means for citizen engagement and can overcome geographic remoteness. However, this means accessibility and connectivity are critical to drive inclusiveness and narrow the digital divide with people unable to engage online.

The headline objectives are to improve:

- **Ensure infrastructure connections in communities** – to broadband and mobile networks, particularly to remote parts of Cumbria.
- **Digital engagement activities** - with public service provision.
- **Improve basic digital skills across every generation** - especially to the elderly and those not digitally experienced.

In addition to the headline objectives the following actions will be prioritised

- **Map digital inclusion levels** – identifying the areas where this is lowest.
- **Target access and intervention in digitally excluded areas** - are the lowest and target interventions in these areas through libraries, community centres, village halls, shops and pubs.
- **Provide digital get started packages** – to those digitally excluded, especially at the entry-level for informal training on how to access digital devices and get online as well as access to hardware and network connectivity.





MOVING TO IMPLEMENTATION

DESIGN PARAMETERS

Digital Cumbria is clear about what needs to be done, but is realistic about the challenges in doing this, given the resourcing envelope available and the scarring impact of the pandemic. Successfully implementing it will therefore be reliant on drive, commitment and hard work.

Cumbria does, however, have a platform to build upon. There is nationally now a wide body of evaluation experience focusing on what makes for economic, efficient, and effective implementation of digital strategies. As partners take Digital Cumbria forward, these evaluation lessons will provide helpful pointers and short-cuts on how to implement well. More than any other, clarity on the functions and then the forms of implementation will be the single most important consideration.

In function terms, implementation of **Digital Cumbria** needs to achieve the following:

- **A real understanding of the digital state of the County, absolutely and relatively** - the evidence assembled in the course of drafting this Framework provides a firm foundation to build on, but this will need to be refreshed regularly and, crucially, partners will need to move their focus on from the data numbers to the causes and explanations underlying these. Clarity of who is responsible for providing the data and identifying when new data becomes valid for comparison will be important.
- **A long-term vision of where Cumbria should, and could, be as a digitally-enabled economy** - this is particularly hard to do within the constraints imposed by public sector spending windows. It is vital in ensuring the stability of the strategy, despite external changes and uncertainty, that the endpoint of our collective journey is understood and maintained. It is helpful to identify what levers are available and who owns them so that all parties are clear what may be achievable, rather than allowing subsequent actions to become just a wish list.
- **Robustness in making the hard choices resulting from our digital vision** - simply put, 'doing what you've always done gives what you've always got'. If Cumbria is going to move ahead and establish itself as a modern, diverse, and resilient digital economy, then those activities underway that are not contributory will need to be left behind. Some simple prioritisation or categorisation of the actions will be helpful early on, so that people are challenged to consider how they can assist the implementation of those actions that are most attractive.
- **Best in class design, implementation, and delivery of actions to take the strategy forward** - this will require looking way beyond Cumbria's borders to see how specific digital challenges have been addressed elsewhere. It may also mean, on occasions, facing up to the fact that delivery capability within Cumbria is not of the calibre or scale needed to tackle the particular challenge we face, and being comfortable about securing solutions from elsewhere in the UK or further afield.





- **The continuing enthusiasm of partners** - to ensure that the process of implementing Smart Cumbria remains consensual and inclusive, and that energies and resources are fully captured. Clarity of ownership of actions between the partners is particularly beneficial. If there is a clear leader, let them lead. Where there is a collaborative action, spell out who will be responsible for galvanising activity.
- **Consistent and influential presentation of Cumbria's digital agenda** - as set out in SMART Cumbria, in local, sub-regional, and regional fora. SMART Cumbria must become established as the definitive statement of digital development in and across the County if notice is to be taken of it. Developing a common language or shorthand for the key actions so that everyone recognises them easily can be important to avoid confusion or unhelpful related actions being developed in parallel by partners.
- **A real commitment to monitoring and evaluation** - so that the relevance locally of strategy action is constantly reviewed, and delivery impact evidenced and maximised.

Having agreed what the key functions demanded of Digital Cumbria are, then and only then, should attention focus on defining suitable forms by which these functions can be delivered. All too often, albeit with the best intention, forms of implementation are agreed before functions have been properly specified.

Defining the form that implementation should take, which could be at any point on the spectrum from part-time in-house officer support through to self-standing digital development company, is a matter for local partners. Again, however, any form will through its structure need to embody the following:

- **Legitimacy from, and accountability to, the businesses, people, and communities of Cumbria.** Typically, this is realised through a wide partnership group, and in a Cumbrian content would be designed to ensure ownership of, and support for, this Strategy from the totality of partners in the locality. Elsewhere, digital strategy partnerships can include up to 200 different representatives, formally assembling perhaps every six months for progress meetings. In the commercial world, such a partnership group would be conceptually akin to a company's shareholders. Accountability for actions must be assigned to lead partners or one partner wherever possible.
- **Strategic Leadership capable of charting the long-term path for Digital Cumbria's direction and implementation.** Would be responsible for the overall strategic direction of the Strategy, and for championing Cumbria and its digital agenda to key audiences. To be optimally effective, the Board would need to comprise individuals with a well-developed understanding of digital, economic, and social regeneration, and strong familiarity with the wider sub-regional, regional and national policy contexts. Alongside Public Sector representatives, the Board should involve specific representation from the Private and Voluntary Sectors.
- **An Executive with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Digital Strategy.** It will not directly deliver the priority actions, rather it will work closely with those partner agencies progressing actions, providing them with support, and encouragement. The Operational Executive would have a crucial role in looking across delivery to make sure the various structural elements of the Strategy cohere; it would also provide the administrative and secretariat requirements of the wider partnership. Public sector representation from partner organisations would be in the form of executive staff.
- **A Delivery Infrastructure, responsible for taking forward those actions defined by the Strategy.** As far as possible, these actions would be delivered through the range of existing delivery bodies, ideally working to clear service level requirements defined by the operational executive to ensure excellence and innovation in delivery. In other cases, where the nature or scale of the challenge of the action demanded that some new form of delivery was appropriate, this may involve forming a bespoke delivery vehicle or buying a solution to the delivery challenge from the market. It is helpful for all partners to be clear about prioritisation. Some actions will be pragmatic and achievable quickly, some will be challenging and worth developing now, and others will be ambitious and visionary.





SUMMARY ACTION PLAN

This section summarises the actions for our three strategic priorities and the objectives and priorities to deliver these in order to deliver Digital Transformation and for Cumbria to be 'connected, capable and creative.'

Whilst the Vision and Strategic Framework are for the long term, the Action Plan will be reviewed annually to assess progress and respond to changes in the operating environment.

The prime emphasis in this section is on those new actions, which, in consultation with partners, are judged to be fundamental to digitally transforming Cumbria. These are not, however, the only actions; through partners' ongoing commitments and activities, a wide range of digital activity is already underway in Cumbria, which this vision and strategy will give additional impetus to.

Strategic Priority	Objectives – the 'why'	Priorities – the 'how'	Lead – the 'who'	By when	Outcome – the 'what'
Digitally Enabled Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitally Enabling Cumbrian Businesses - across all sectors of the economy – to improve productivity, better connect with customers, access new markets and grow more rapidly. • Secure Additional Investment and Resource - to provide businesses with the awareness and support necessary to adapt and take advantage of technology to grow their business and deliver productivity gains. • Growing Cumbria's Digital Sector, including IT services and software, to address the current relatively low levels of businesses and employment in Cumbria in one of the UK's fastest growing sectors. • Accelerating the use of digital throughout Cumbria's acclaimed cultural and arts sector to ensure that Cumbria's STEAM ambition is delivered. • Develop exemplar projects in artificial intelligence - building on Cumbria's world leading expertise in advanced manufacturing and clean energy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a Digital Take -Up Mapping Exercise – sector by sector to identify the pace of take up and opportunities for acceleration. • Develop an Investment and Advice Map – to ensure that businesses are aware of the support available to help them move forward their digitalisation objectives. • Re-Boot the Your Future campaign - to attract high-skilled employees to live and work from home in Cumbria, given the rapid acceleration of home-working. • Identify Suitable Digital Start Up and Hub space - campaign to attract more digital technology and creative industries to Cumbria, by providing premises for digital hubs. • Highlight Cumbria's digital success stories – to promote take up by other businesses including through engagement with high profile national initiatives such as Tech Nation. 	Cumbria LEP/ Business Strategy Group	Q3/2021	<p>An efficient and productive business base, which uses the latest digital technologies.</p> <p>Growth of digital technology and creative industries, business and employment in Cumbria</p>



Strategic Priority	Objectives – the ‘why’	Priorities – the ‘how’	Lead – the ‘who’	By when	Outcome -the ‘what’
<p>Digitally Capable People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an Expression of Interest in an Institute of Technology - led by Furness College with University of Cumbria as the Higher Education partner – the proposal will establish a network of facilities across the county for the Healthcare and Manufacturing sectors, with digital skills support a key element of the curriculum. • Development of a Digital Accelerator project - within the Workington Town Deal to support industry specific higher level digital skills. • Contributing to programme development for digital bootcamps - which will innovative delivery of digital skills across the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the adaptability of the workforce to future changes – by developing digital capability. • Support the capacity of schools to nurture and develop children’s digital capabilities - through formal education by embracing technology and encouraging its use in the classroom. Deliver targeted school-business engagement activities focused on the STEM requirements of future employers. • Enable educationalists to be digitally enabled - ensure schools are plugged into the leading digital networks and have resources to access appropriate digital equipment and software to enable pupils to learn with the latest digital applications. • Align the FE Curriculum with business needs - FE colleges to deliver curriculum and content that is relevant to employers needs and emerging trends in the digital sector. • Encourage Higher Education provision - to develop its digital offer. • Deliver skills-based training to older people - who are not digitally capable so that they are not excluded from digital transactions and benefits in day to day life; • Embed digital in the sector-led skills plans – ensuring that the specific challenges and opportunities are addressed. • Lead engagement with https://digileaders.com/ - to help sectoral leaders to collaborate professionally and leverage technology to drive economic growth. 	<p>CLEP/ People, Employment and Skills Strategy Group</p>	<p>Q4/2021</p>	<p>A digitally capable workforce, that has the necessary skills for their current and future roles</p>





Strategic Priority	Objectives – the ‘why’	Priorities – the ‘how’	Lead – the ‘who’	By when	Outcome -the ‘what’
Digitally Inclusive communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure infrastructure connections in communities – to broadband and mobile networks, particularly to remote parts of Cumbria.• Digital engagement activities - with public service provision.• Improve basic digital skills across every generation - especially to the elderly and those not digitally experienced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map digital inclusion levels – identifying the areas where this is lowest.• Target access and intervention in digitally excluded areas - are the lowest and target interventions in these areas through libraries, community centres, village halls, shops and pubs.• Provide digital get started packages – to those digitally excluded, especially at the entry-level for informal training on how to access digital devices and get online as well as access to hardware and network connectivity.	CLEP/Places Strategy Group	Q2/2022	A society in which everybody and every community can effectively engage in the digital agenda





MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Digital Cumbria represents a new and bold approach to supporting the people, communities, and businesses in the County. The undertaking will be a significant one – the challenges to be faced are stretching and the operational context will not be static. Changes will come from within the locality in response to the Strategy and from elsewhere as the economic and digital environment changes. New funding opportunities may also materialise, which are likely to have a direct impact on the aspirations set out in **Digital Cumbria**.

To respond to these challenges, and to demonstrate progress, it is vital that the delivery of **Digital Cumbria** is underpinned with a robust Monitoring and Evaluation framework, which is able to provide intelligence, both in real-time and in retrospect, on the changing strategic context and on the differences that the Strategy and its actions can leverage.

COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

In meeting the above requirements, the Monitoring and Evaluation framework has been constructed in two parts. A top-down component to monitor the changing state of the digital context in Cumbria, requiring the use of condition indicators. The second bottom-up component, which will enable the Strategy's activities, outputs, and outcomes/impacts to be assessed using appropriate Response Indicators.

Taken together, the two components provide a clear and robust insight into the Strategy's efficiency and effectiveness in bringing about desired changes in the digital state of Cumbria. The use and development of the framework will of course be iterative. Over time, as operating evidence and experience develops, the framework will yield information on those actions that are more effective and efficient than others, allowing strategic and operational priorities to be reshaped accordingly.

