



End of year review 2020/21



End of year review 2020/21 – The five North East Strategic Economic Plan programmes

Business Growth

Activity	Key deliverables - what we will deliver between April 2020 and March 2021	Progress
Continue to develop the North East Growth Hub's capacity to stimulate higher levels of demand for business startup, growth, scaleup and productivity support:	Generate 17,000+ referrals to the Business Support Provider Network.	We generated 35,905 referrals to the Business Support Provider Network. We outreached to 15,126 businesses to discuss EU transition preparations.
	Double the capacity of the North East Growth Hub to deliver one-to-one diagnosis and impartial brokerage to 1,000+ businesses.	We increased the team from four Connectors to 13.5 Connectors and seven Triage Officers to deliver one-to-one diagnosis and impartial brokerage to 1,437 businesses (1,282 of which were unique businesses). These interactions achieved a customer satisfaction rate of 98%.
	Provide account management to 440 businesses that demonstrate scaleup potential and increase GVA per employee by an average of £2.9k.	We delivered high intensity assists to 871 businesses through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Networks • High Potential Startups • Scaleup North East • Providing account management to businesses with scaleup potential via Supply Chain North East – recognised as a national exemplar in the 2021 Scaleup Institute Review. Forecast to generate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £4,080 GVA per employee increase • £72,166,669 additional GVA • 797 new jobs • 502 of which are better jobs.
	Introduce five additional sector-based Growth Hub Connectors to expand reach and focus on the North East's areas of opportunity.	COVID-19 meant that the Business Growth programme had to adapt and introduce capacity to support businesses to deal with the effects of the pandemic. Supporting sectors remains a priority for 2021/22.

Develop thematic toolkits available through northeastgrowthhub.co.uk that aggregate and simplify support in areas that encourage business engagement in startup, growth, scaleup and productivity improvement. Each toolkit should look to attract over 1,000 visitors, 250 engagements and referrals to the Business Support Provider Network.

There were four key toolkits developed during 2020/21. All of which surpassed the engagement aim.

COVID-19

- 11,285 visitors
- 389 engagements
- 976 referrals generated.

Digital Adoption

- 1,082 visitors
- 4 engagements
- 87 referrals generated.

Start-up

- 3,142 visitors
- 38 engagements
- 590 referrals generated.

EU Transition

- 3,902 visitors
- 62 engagements
- 458 referrals generated.

Create a simplified and impactful business support ecosystem that supports the recovery and levelling up of the North East economy

As part of the development of future regional economic strategy, work with government, NP11 and the North East Business Support Provider Network to develop a simplified future ecosystem model targeted at levelling up regional business birth rate, productivity, internationalisation and scaleup performance.

We worked with government to inform business support reform and published a paper detailing proposals on the development of a more transformative ecosystem.

We facilitated 10 interactive sessions with the Business Growth Board and Business Support Provider Network to inform future policy.

We led a bid that secured and funded the North East's position on the government sponsored MIT REAP programme.

We continued to deliver and extend the scope of High Potential Startups to support opportunity driven startups during the pandemic.

We kick-started a project to support the uplift in business startups and harnessed this as an opportunity to increase the region's business density.

The sector teams were integrated into the Business Growth programme to support the transition from strategy development to delivery.

We commissioned an Access to Finance Task and Finish Group chaired by Deloitte, with the recommendations endorsed by both the Business Growth and Innovation Boards.

We are working closely with the Department for International Trade and North East England Chamber of Commerce to deliver a trade and export strategy for the region.

Continue to develop the North East Business Support Provider Network as a mechanism of simplifying and aligning providers to business and economic priorities, sharing best practice, encouraging collaboration and cross referrals.	<p>We identified gaps in provision - such as the need to support businesses to supply PPE and ventilators to the NHS - and secured £800,000 additional investment into Supply Chain North East to enable businesses to do this.</p> <p>We worked with the Business Support Provider Network to introduce the COVID-19 business support framework which focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting a business in a crisis • Operating under COVID-19 restrictions • Spotting and acting on new opportunities.
Introduce a business resilience health check through the North East Growth Hub to support 200+ businesses to prepare for COVID-19 recovery and EU Transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We introduced the Resilience Health Check based on the Oxford Innovation Growth Mapper diagnostic platform. • Due to the importance of the regional economy and the combined impact of both COVID-19 and the EU Transition, we commissioned the North East Automotive Alliance, via open procurement, to support businesses in the automotive industry to mitigate the risk posed to the sector. We secured secondees from RTC North and the SME Centre of Excellence to support this work.
Deliver Kick-starting Tourism and COVID-19 recovery ERDF grant programme to 400+ businesses.	We secured £2.4 million of European Funding for Kick-starting Tourism and Restart and Recovery grants. Working in partnership with NBSL Ltd, we provided 100% grants to 600 businesses to support them to recover from COVID-19.
Work with government to mobilise 40 peer networks to support businesses to recover from COVID-19, engaging 320+ participants.	<p>We secured investment for 25 peer networks engaging 212 businesses in more than 20hrs of support between November and March.</p> <p>Based on this strong performance, we secured ongoing investment in Peer Networks from government for 2021/22 to deliver a further 26 cohorts – the highest allocation in the country.</p>
Provide up-to-date information, guidance and insights to businesses through the North East Growth Hub COVID-19 and EU Transition toolkits. Monitor impact of the information via measurement of engagements, time on page and referrals to the North East Growth Hub Provider Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We gathered intelligence through outbound calling to more than 15,000 businesses and received 870 responses to our online surveys. This data and intelligence from North East Growth Hub interventions was used to submit weekly intelligence reports to government which in turn informed its response to COVID-19 and EU Transition. The reports also included wider intelligence from the EU Exit group and from our seven local authorities. • The intelligence gathered continues to inform the development of the COVID-19 and EU Transition toolkits.



Innovation

Activity	Key deliverables - What we will deliver between April 2020 and March 2021	Progress
<p>Stimulate new business opportunities through Challenge North East:</p>	<p>Deliver a North East open innovation challenge framework to stimulate innovation activity in the region, including a pilot which will provide finance to 10 projects to support the regional COVID-19 recovery response by March 2021.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to deliver an open innovation programme through the INVITE Project by August 2020, taking learning from European partners to shape our Challenge North East programme. This programme will be closed by October 2020, with learning used to inform the design of Challenge North East.</p>	<p>We secured £371,000 from the Local Growth Fund to deliver the Challenge North East pilot on COVID-19 recovery. The challenges were phased: initial development and detailed solution.</p> <p>A digital platform was developed to host Challenge North East and two challenges were delivered with strong interest from the region's business community. These were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivering safe and engaging in-person events, which received 41 expressions of interest. 2. Adapting the delivery of home-based services, which received 22 expressions of interest. <p>16 projects were awarded grants totalling £79,130 to develop solutions. Seven of the challenge participants secured a total of £121,000 follow-on funding to develop their solutions.</p> <hr/> <p>The INVITE programme closed in August 2020 and its KPIs were delivered on time and on budget. The project enabled collaboration between businesses across Europe with financial support for 10 SMEs in the North East LEP area. Learning informed the development of Challenge North East and is embedded in the wider North East open innovation framework.</p>
<p>Prioritise a regional pipeline of projects to form a Strategic Investment Programme:</p>	<p>Support the production of investment-ready business cases for regionally significant projects, engaging partners using the established quarterly reporting process throughout 2020/21.</p> <hr/> <p>Host at least two events in partnership with the Innovation SuperNetwork to support businesses to prepare for emerging funding calls throughout 2020/21.</p>	<p>The Innovation Board championed fourteen regionally significant innovation projects after engagement throughout the year. The Board continues to act as a critical friend throughout the business case development.</p> <p>£65.2 million pounds of public funding was secured by the region for these priority innovation projects.</p> <hr/> <p>VentureFest North East was successfully delivered virtually on 17 March 2021. 452 people attended the event with 691 visits to exhibition stands, 96 live meetings with exhibitors and 258 people attending the workshops.</p> <p>We supported the Accelerating Innovation and Investment Summit in September 2020, with a keynote speech from Ammar Mirza CBE. Over 140 people attended the summit.</p>

<p>Support our businesses to capitalise on local research and innovation capability including through the COVID-19 recovery response:</p>	<p>Commission a research project that identifies emerging market opportunities for the North East by December 2020.</p>	<p>We were not able to appoint a supplier to fully deliver this project through open procurement despite market testing. We commissioned an in-depth data project to inform the foresight analysis and appointed the government's Open Innovation Team to provide critical challenge to the project.</p> <p>Through the collaborative relationship between Durham University and the North East LEP we were able to resource and initiate a research project using Impact Accelerator Funding. The project examined the levels and types of innovation activity in different places in the North East. The project will conclude in 2021/22 and will inform our work to 'level up' through innovation. We expect to contract a consortium in early 2021/22 to start this research.</p>
	<p>Produce a plan for maximising the use of regional assets and capabilities to increase share of the identified emerging market opportunities and support the COVID-19 recovery by March 2021.</p>	<p>Whilst we did not appoint and progress the emerging markets study during 2020/21, we continued to support regional partners to maximise use of and engagement with innovation assets through progression of the Innovation Delivery Partnership pilot programme.</p>
<p>Increase private sector investment into growing innovation businesses:</p>	<p>Develop an action plan for engaging with the private sector and investors to increase private sector investment in the North East. To be endorsed by the North East LEP Board and rolled out by January 2021.</p>	<p>We worked with the Business Growth Board to review the access to finance landscape and reported gaps in supply of and demand for finance. Actions identified in the roadmap produced will be taken forward during 2021/22.</p>
<p>Engage with partners to identify emerging opportunities and drive business growth through an Innovation Delivery Partnerships (IDP) approach:</p>	<p>Deliver an IDP pilot programme which will target five niche emerging market opportunities. This will test and refine the IDP concept and produce a model for successful partnerships by October 2020.</p>	<p>The Innovation Delivery Partnership (IDP) pilot was approved by LEP Board in January 2021. Partners have come forward through an expression of interest process to identify global market opportunities in which North East market share can be increased. 11 IDPs were selected for the pilot of which seven are developed (Pathfinder IDPs) and four are emerging (Development IDPs).</p>
<p>Coordinate regional partners to provide enhanced innovation support activity:</p>	<p>Improve the North East business support landscape by forming a consortium of providers to help roll-out the co-developed model for Business Growth and Innovation Support by December 2020, to grow innovative businesses and support the COVID-19 response.</p>	<p>We used the co-developed model for business growth and innovation support as the foundation for a financial input-output model to assess the potential impact of a range of interventions in advance of preparing business cases for future interventions.</p>
	<p>Produce a comprehensive Innovation Framework which will be used as an engagement and coordination tool to realise North East innovation strengths, priorities and opportunities by October 2020.</p>	<p>Eight KPIs make up the framework to support the dual aims of increasing innovation activity and investment in R&D and innovation. The KPIs have been baselined and updated. You can see the KPIs and the progress being made towards them here.</p>

Skills, employment, inclusion and progression

Activity	Key deliverables - What we will deliver between April 2020 and March 2021	Progress
Deliver North East Ambition	<p>Three Regional Career Leader Network Meetings that bring together over 100 of the region's Career Leaders, as well as other key stakeholders, in order that they can network, share best practice and access resources and CPD.</p> <p>10 Opportunities Bulletins, highlighting a variety of resources, events and activities that will enable the schools and colleges to further develop and enhance their career's programmes.</p>	<p>We hosted three virtual Regional Career Leader Network Meetings during the year. Sessions welcomed external speakers and focused on topics including LMI, further education and apprenticeship opportunities, as well as examples of best practice from across the region. Over 100 Careers Leaders signed up to each of these meetings and feedback was positive.</p> <p>Over 60 Opportunities Bulletins issued to schools and colleges. We have refined our approach so there are individual bulletins for primary, secondary and colleges, as well as SEND schools. The average open rate is between 35.5% - 55.3%, which is above the national average of 23.4% for education and training newsletters.</p>
	<p>A minimum of three hub meetings per academic year, which offer targeted support to enable the schools and colleges to accelerate progress against the eight benchmarks.</p> <p>A minimum of one 1:1 meeting with each school and college, including a follow-up report that provides details on progress, and plans for the forthcoming year.</p>	<p>We organised three virtual hub meetings for each of our CEC funded hubs this year, as well as for the schools involved in the Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot. A total of 12 hub meetings took place.</p> <p>1:1 meetings took place with over 200 schools and colleges across our network of primary schools, secondary schools, SEND schools and colleges to discuss progress and support requirements. Follow-up reports and action plans were completed where required and appropriate.</p>
	<p>Working with partners to provide teacher externships in businesses.</p>	<p>We delivered teacher externships and project based learning activities to 226 teachers, involving 40 SMEs and 28 educational establishments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that participating gave them an insight into the world of work • 75% of teachers surveyed were more confident about offering career advice after participating. They developed subject knowledge to support their CPD • Schools strengthened links with employers to support careers education, information, advice, and guidance. <p>STEM Ambassadors from a diverse range of organisations across the North East provide an opportunity for youngsters to meet inspiring role models, understand real-world applications of STEM subjects and experience hands-on STEM activities that engage and inspire.</p>

<p>A new Opportunities Bulletin specifically for business leaders, which will be distributed at least 10 times per year. Continue to deliver STEM Ambassador network across the region to industry leaders.</p>	<p>Two new Opportunities Bulletins specifically for business leaders were developed and distributed on a fortnightly basis. The Enterprise Adviser newsletter is distributed to 137 readers and has an average open rate of 27%. The Education Engagement Partners newsletter is circulated to 80 readers and is sent via the Enterprise Coordinator team.</p>
<p>Maintain our influence through a number of national working groups and steering groups. Deliver presentations to various audiences at regional and national conferences and events. Host learning visits to the region from delegates outside the North East of England.</p>	<p>We have delivered presentations at national and regional conferences and events. This includes a national AOC webinar, The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) FE & Skills webinar, Ogden Trust's School's Partnership Conference as well as each of the local authority area's Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) groups.</p> <p>We have been part of national steering groups including the CEC's Primary Headteachers' Steering Group; the CEC's FE & Skills Group and the CEC's SEND Community of Practice Group.</p> <p>We provided evidence-based analysis input into various workstreams of the Youth Employment UK's C-19 Youth Employment Group as well as a number of different national project-based activities with the Gatsby Foundation.</p>
<p>Deliver Education Challenge:</p> <p>Deliver the first year of the Opportunities North East Pilot across 16 ONE Vision schools identified by the Department for Education.</p> <p>Support Phase 2 expansion of the Ford Next Generation Learning (FNGL) partnership in each of the new schools and colleges. Through the Industry Alignment team establish new relationships with local communities, including employers and industry sector organisations to support action planning and implementation of the action plans.</p> <p>Strengthen the LEP's role as a School Governance Champion organisation, work with recruiting organisations and further develop a regional communications strategy to actively promote the positive impact effective governance has on educational outcomes. Produce at least three case studies with a focus on the benefits of diverse governance.</p>	<p>We delivered Year one in line with the approved project proposal.</p> <p>All 16 schools are engaged, project risk management has been implemented to minimise the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Data has been shared with stakeholders, enabling activity and interventions to be implemented with young people.</p> <p>The partnership has expanded to a further two secondary schools and one FE College. COVID-19 has affected the progress against the Ford Next Generation Learning Roadmap particularly in the secondary school settings.</p> <p>In January 2021 the partnership was expanded into one more FE College and work will continue with them through 2021. Industry panels in FE settings have been formed through the partnership work to support curriculum work and meaningful experiences for young people.</p> <p>Partnership with Inspiring Governance has continued to develop with successful recruitment of new governors to North East school governing bodies, a formal marketing and communication strategy is in the process of being developed and activity will be carried into 2021 – 2022.</p>

	<p>Amend to 'Alongside partners we will develop an approach to, and offer of, continued professional development to increase the impact of business and education engagement.</p>	<p>We have continued to signpost Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to schools and colleges and developed new partnerships with particular specialisms. Examples include Project Based Learning with Newcastle University and South Eastern Regional College who have supported North East schools and colleges. We have responded to specific requests for support and delivered bespoke CPD as required.</p>
	<p>Develop an investment priority strategy based on the asset map summary report of FE, HE and other provision in education and training.</p>	<p>The development of this strategy was postponed due to the impact of COVID-19 on education and training partners. The strategy will be progressed in 2021/22.</p>
	<p>Continue, alongside key partners, to develop a fusion skills pilot to promote the concept of fusion skills regionally based on international research and support individuals to recognise and record their skills.</p>	<p>We developed a positive working relationship with the Ellen McArthur Foundation which uses the circular economy as a framework to raise awareness and promote the range of fusion skills required for personal and professional development linked to entrepreneurial behaviours and business development and growth. The Foundation has now delivered circular economy sessions to primary and college hub members and the senior leadership team at the North East LEP.</p> <p>We have developed a proposition for a fusion skills pilot and are now considering ways in which we may fund this activity.</p>
<p>Improve skills progression:</p>	<p>Continue to promote apprenticeships across all levels and to achieve a growth in the number of high quality apprenticeships undertaken.</p> <p>Protect existing apprenticeships and incentivisation to increase the number of apprenticeships available.</p>	<p>Business insights breakfast session on apprenticeships with education and business stakeholders took place during National Apprenticeship Week with 180 business in attendance and keynote speakers from CBI, TUC, Department for Education (DfE) and North East LEP Business Growth Team and case studies from local employers.</p> <p>The Apprenticeship Toolkit on the North East Growth Hub generated 1,875 page views from 1,666 unique users. The toolkit provides up-to-date information and guidance for businesses - including apprenticeship recruitment, employee support, financial advice and the latest COVID-19 government guidance.</p> <p>Established a North East LEP Apprenticeship group with government representation to identify barriers to achieving apprenticeship starts and completions, informing the comprehensive spending budget review leading to the introduction of additional flexibilities and incentives.</p> <p>Increasing the number of good quality apprenticeships in the region is a key priority for the Skills Advisory Panel as we continue to recover from the economic impact of COVID-19. Apprenticeships, alongside Traineeships and Kickstart, offer good opportunities for younger people to gain entry to the workforce.</p>

<p>Enable adults of all ages to access careers advice, retraining and reskilling in order to transition into stable or growing sectors (based on regional LMI).</p>	<p>We have published information on North East Opportunities that helps young people, along with their parents/carers, to better understand each of their options and where they can find out additional information or seek guidance. This platform also provides adults with details of where they can seek guidance if they are looking to re-skill or re-train and provides details of real-time vacancy opportunities as well as courses.</p> <p>Secured funding from government to deliver a Mid Life MOT pilot programme where we engaged with SMEs to support them to understand the importance and productivity benefits of a mixed age workforce as part of the Department for Work and Pensions's 50+ Choices programme.</p>
<p>To continue to support the role out of T-levels in the North East and to work with curriculum leads in specialist technical education from September 2020 through the North East Institute of Technology (IOT).</p>	<p>The North East LEP has created a three-tier approach to support the design and delivery of T-levels in the LEP area: establishing a Stakeholder group comprising of national representatives responsible for T-levels; a Provider group involving all of those early T-level adopters and Colleges interested in delivering T-levels in the future; and Route network groups focused on collaboration to support meeting teaching workforce development needs and industrial placement targets. The North East LEP is also leading on a national dissemination project for T-levels, funded by the Gatsby Foundation, to better understand what works at a local project level for the effective planning and delivery of T-levels.</p> <p>We are further supporting the teaching workforce's development needs and links with employers to strengthen skills progression through the development of a series of industry insight sessions. They inform the teaching, careers community and learners of specific sectors/industries where considerable change and growth is forecast, and provide an understanding of the skills required to engage in new job opportunities.</p> <p>The LEP has also invested in and is represented on the Operational Board of the North East Institute of Technology as a sign of our commitment to the role out of specialist technical education in the North East. This is enabling us to support progression pathways from T-levels into higher level technical education routes.</p>
<p>Continue to look for opportunities to fund an HE careers pilot.</p>	<p>The LEP is working alongside the region's four universities in a newly created Careers Group. The aim is to support graduates to understand the labour market opportunities available within the North East and what additional skills employers and recruiters consider to be of value, including how to articulate their range of fusion skills.</p>
<p>Deliver our annual 'Live Work and Stay' campaign highlighting the benefits for recent graduates and skilled workers to stay in the region.</p>	<p>COVID-19 meant that we had to adapt and introduce capacity to support partners to deal with the effects of the pandemic which took priority over the Live Work and Stay campaign, so this element of our plan was not delivered.</p>

Increase youth employment:	Continue to work with partners to reduce unemployment for young people, to encourage training, and through robust labour market intelligence provide opportunities for young people to enter key growth sectors. Continue to learn from best practice examples, including Generation NE and Durham Works, and support the continued funding of these important schemes.	<p>The highly successful Generation North East programme ended in March 2021. Since 2014, the youth programme has provided tailored employment support to over 6,500 individuals (aged 18-29 years, with over 2,500 of those young people moving into employment or self-employment). The use of digital technology was a key success factor in the delivery of this programme and this methodology will be incorporated where possible in future commissioning of programmes.</p> <p>We continue to support Durham Works and work in collaboration with local partners by providing LMI intelligence to inform strategies and practice.</p>
	Continue to encourage European Social Fund projects, providing critical support to help young people enter the labour market.	<p>The North East LEP area has secured £29.1 million European Social Fund (ESF) resources from the ESF Reserve Fund throughout 2020/21. A call for £20 million to fund projects targeting young people negatively impacted by COVID-19 was launched in March 2021 and closes in May/June 2021 for projected delivery to December 2023.</p> <p>Existing projects that have performed well have been invited to bid for further 'Reserve Fund' monies up to 50% of their current contract value to allow service delivery through to December 2023. This mitigates the delays in delivery caused by the pandemic and enables support for more young people.</p> <p>The ability to secure the required match funding remains the key challenge.</p>
	Develop programmes of careers guidance, education and skills support for education leavers and young people aged 16-24 to prevent NEET figures increasing.	Through our Skills Advisory Panel membership, we worked with our education partners and local authorities to support them with the transition of young people from schools into further education, apprenticeships and higher education, including developing a highly effective and accessible portal called North East Ambition: Work Experience.
	Continue to highlight the importance of digital skills across education, training and re-skilling	<p>We have worked in partnership with the third sector to ensure that digital inclusion is central to the North East Digital for Growth workforce strategy.</p> <p>The Skills Advisory Panel has commissioned work to look at the application of digital technology across all sectors to analyse future skills and enable us to prioritise activity to ensure the North East has an inclusive digitally enabled economy. This was commissioned in January 2021 as is expected to be delivered in June 2021.</p>
Improve labour market activation:	Continue to work with partners and potential funders to find a way to deliver targeted support for people facing health barriers to employment, building on and incorporating the lessons learned from projects such as the Mental Health trailblazer and Working Links.	We are working with Durham University to develop a series of case studies looking at Good Work and the benefits this has on workforce, including better retention, good mental health and a willingness to participate in CPD and training. The proposal has been approved for funding and the project will be delivered in 2021/22.

Short term, flexible and responsive support for those closest to the labour market.

The Skills Advisory Panel and the North East LEP Skills Team worked with our regional and local partners to ensure that businesses, communities and individuals were aware of and accessed support and interventions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on skills and employment. Our activities have included:

Supporting partners (JCP and DWP's rapid response team, the National Careers Service) to raise awareness of employability support programmes including Job Retention Scheme, Self Employment Income Support Scheme, Job Entry Targeted Support, Kickstart.

The Skills Toolkit and information of other support services are being promoted through the North East Growth Hub and a sustained and effective social media campaign.

The National Careers Service has been working with local authorities to roll out the Jobs Fuse programme. This is a new programme that supports workers impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, including furloughed workers, to return to work and help employers fill vacancies. It also provides information and support to employers to plan for their furloughed employees.

Grow the number of apprenticeships by promoting access courses and information regarding the benefits of an apprenticeship.

Leading the North East LEP Apprenticeships Steering Group, working in partnership with government, Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IFATE) and the Apprenticeship Ambassador network to facilitate collaboration between education and learning providers to ensure the apprenticeship offer in the region meets current and future skills needs. Through North East Ambition we are working in partnership with Education Development Trust to develop a Skills Portal to encourage the take up of apprenticeships.

Ensure connected communities:

Prioritise the delivery of the digital strategy workforce theme focusing on accessible and inclusive digital skills provision, including those skills that employers tell us are a priority as part of the recovery.

We are working with partners and stakeholders to support activities and interventions that empower individuals to take action to future proof their career by having the opportunity to develop skills and access training in line with labour market demand. Activities have included supporting the formation of a collaboration of colleges and providers to submit an application for a Digital Skills Bootcamps pilot in the North East LEP area.



Transport Connectivity

Activity	Key deliverables - What we will deliver between April 2020 and March 2021	Progress
<p>Delivery of the Transforming Cities Fund Tranche 1 programme and part of Tranche 2 programme following funding award:</p>	<p>All Tranche 1 schemes will be delivered in full by early 2020/21.</p>	<p>There are 19 schemes in Tranche 1 of Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). Due to COVID-19 there were a number of delays, but as of the end of March 2021, 14 were completed. A further two are expected to be completed by the end of July 2021 and the remaining three are expected to be completed by the end of December 2021.</p>
	<p>The first Tranche 2 schemes by March 2021, as part of a three-year prioritised programme.</p>	<p>The North East region was allocated Tranche 2 funding in March 2020. A prioritised list of 26 schemes plus Metro Flow was produced, all of which are due to be complete by March 2023. There have been delays in the development of these schemes due to the impact of COVID-19. There is an element of over-programming and a strategy to deal with this is being developed.</p> <p>The majority of schemes are well underway with the production of business cases. The first scheme to pass through the full assurance process was Durham Bus Station, which was granted full funding by the Joint Transport Committee in January 2021.</p> <p>The Nexus Projects: Design and Development of Park and Ride and Digital / Smart Parking schemes are progressing. Completion is expected by March 2023.</p>
<p>Continue to progress and deliver the LGF Transport programme:</p>	<p>LGF transport schemes to be delivered by the end of the financial year.</p>	<p>Work has progressed on six transport projects with two fully completed - a new rail station at Horden, County Durham, and the Nexus Metro Learning Centre in South Shields. Work on Newcastle Central Station Gateway improvements commenced, and a study was funded into EV Charging point provision across the region with follow-on investment to improve coverage planned in 2021/22.</p>

Completion of the Metro Asset Renewal programme:	Track Renewals - Crossgates, South Shields completed May 2020. Rail Renewal in Central Area Tunnels.	The Crossgates renewals work was completed in Autumn 2020. The Central Area tunnel rail renewal was completed by internal teams during overnight access with no service disruption.
	QEII Bridge to Gateshead Stadium. Heworth to Pelaw by August 2020. Network-wide track alignment for platform - track interface alignment by November 2020.	The track renewals from Heworth to Pelaw were completed in Autumn 2020, with some follow-up work recently completed in March 2021. Track interface / alignment work will now continue into Autumn 2021. Identification of additional scope and critical plant availability has disrupted the programme but work will be completed well in advance of the arrival of the first new Metro Car.
	Network-wide renewal of Overhead Line Equipment - paused from April - June due to COVID-19 working restrictions but planned to resume in late June.	Work resumed in June 2020 with weekend renewals every three weeks. The opportunity was taken to renew a critical 16,000m of contact wire in the 'Central Corridor' between Regent Centre and Heworth in February 2021 (over two weeks) whilst patronage was greatly reduced due to COVID-19. This also enabled access for other extensive capital and maintenance works.
	Completion of station refurbishment at Monkseaton, West Monkseaton, Cullercoats, Shiremoor, Palmersville, Benton and Longbenton.	All station refurbishments were completed by March 2021.
	Radio Rail Traffic Management System (RTMS) closed out and support contracts in place.	This is complete and fully operational with support contracts agreed and in place.
	Renewal of critical point motors - to complete in late 2020.	The full programme of 32 point motor replacement concluded in December 2020.
	Continued fleet investment - to improve reliability of current Metro fleet.	This has been completed to plan - an ongoing annual programme will continue until a replacement fleet is in operation.
	Occupation of Nexus Learning Centre expected end of July 2020.	The Nexus Learning Centre has been occupied from July 2020 and is operational for delivery of training.
Deliver the Go Ultra Low North East programme:	Delivery of 11 rapid charging hubs.	Nine of the rapid charging hubs have now been installed. The remaining two hubs will be installed by the end of June 2021.
	Provide targeted support and advice to SMEs about the potential benefits of switching to a low emission vehicle.	56 SMEs have received 12 hours of targeted support to show the potential benefits of switching to low emission vehicles.
	Deliver 10 Electric Vehicle rapid charging posts for use by the taxi industry, funded by the OLEV Taxi Fund by December 2020.	Eight of the 10 chargers are now installed. We anticipate the remaining two chargers at Wallsend and Newcastle's Blandford Square will be completed by 31 December 2021

Deliver Emergency Active Travel Funding (Tranche 1), bid into Tranche 2, and deliver active travel schemes:	Deliver schemes by August 2020 (Tranche 1) and March 2021 (Tranche 2) subject to bids being successful.	All Tranche 1 schemes have been delivered. Funding for Tranche 2 schemes was allocated to the region in November 2020 with schemes to be delivered by March 2022.
Continue to develop the regional North East Strategy and align it with the COVID-19 economic recovery plan:	Publication of a 15-year transport strategy setting the direction for transport in the region. Production of an accompanying implementation plan by mid-2021.	In March 2021, the North East Joint Transport Committee approved the publication of the North East Transport Plan, alongside the associated Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and the consultation feedback report. The Joint Transport Committee worked with the North East LEP on 'Connected North East: Our Blueprint' which forms the basis of ongoing discussions with government about regional transport and digital connectivity post COVID-19. The document was published October 2020.
Use transport to drive innovation and business growth:	Continue to use transport as an enabler, linking people to employment opportunities, generating economic growth and business investment. Produce a pipeline of schemes to support economic recovery.	A 15-year pipeline of investments is included within the North East Transport Plan, which includes projects that link people to employment and that will support the economy, health and social inequalities, environment, focus on people and geography.
	Continue to improve transport connections, making it quicker and easier to transport goods and freight, enabling the economy to grow. Produce a pipeline of schemes which will support economic recovery following the lockdown period.	The region has developed a pipeline of connectivity schemes which will support economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the onward success of the region. These schemes are included in our Connectivity Blueprint and North East Transport Plan.
	Seek investment for the East Coast Mainline to provide the capacity and line speeds to meet existing and future requirements.	There have been a number of opportunities through the year for the North East Joint Transport Committee to push the case for investment in the East Coast Mainline (ECML). Most notable through government consultations on the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, and the Union Connectivity review. Progress has also been made through the Invest East Coast (Campaign with ECMA) and through progressing a preferred option for the TfN NPR route including the reopening of the Leamside Line.



Investment and Infrastructure

Activity	Key deliverables - What we will deliver between April 2020 and March 2021	Progress
<p>Manage the already secured North East LEP funding effectively:</p>	<p>Programme managers to attend each North East LEP Investment Board and submit quarterly progress monitoring dashboards.</p>	<p>Programme managers attended and presented performance reports and dashboards at the Investment Board meetings during 2020-2021. Additional Board meetings were added during the year to expedite the Getting Building Fund programme funds allocated in July 2020.</p>
	<p>Monitor programme level risks via the Technical Officer Group.</p>	<p>Programme level delivery risks are discussed at the Technical Officers Group and then addressed at Investment Board meetings throughout the year. Effective mitigating action was taken to avoid budget underspend on both the Getting Building Fund and Local Growth Fund programmes.</p>
	<p>Submit quarterly performance monitoring returns to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Enterprise Zones. Key infrastructure outputs by March 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure works completed on Integra 61, Bowburn - over 1,000 jobs • Infrastructure works on Jade Business Park progressed - over 80 jobs • Infrastructure works on Northumberland Energy Park phase one complete- 15 ha. land reclaimed • Completion of phase one infrastructure works on IAMP (International Advanced Manufacturing Park) - three new buildings operational with 200+ jobs. 	<p>All quarterly performance monitoring returns were submitted to MHCLG on time and to the required standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integra 61 – 1,360 jobs created, with two new businesses operational • Jade Business Park – Phase 1 works completed, with 57 jobs created • Northumberland Energy Park – ongoing. Additional infrastructure works were identified during the year. Consequently, full reclamation was delayed until Spring 2022 • IAMP – Phase 1 works completed with three new buildings operational (one re-purposed as a NHS Nightingale Hospital). The number of jobs on site increased to 120, excluding NHS temporary jobs.
	<p>Fully spend the 2020/21 annual LGF budget of £14.5 million.</p>	<p>The budget of £14.5 million was fully spent. In addition, the £23.5 million Getting Building Fund budget secured during the year was also fully spent.</p>
	<p>Complete the next phase of LGF interim programme evaluation activities by March 2021.</p>	<p>The interim evaluation contract was issued three months later than planned following consultations on the final brief and inclusion of the EZ programme to achieve economies by undertaking a joint review. Awarded in January 2021 to Steer Ed, the final consultant's report is now planned for completion in July 2021.</p>

Ensure that the Local Assurance Framework is adhered to when making funding decisions by maintaining the operational management structures and decision-making accountabilities within the North East LEP.

The Assurance Framework has guided operational programmes and was updated through the year to reflect the revised LEP constitution and change in accountable body in April 2020. The relevant documents and processes were updated to comply with the new UK subsidy guidelines that came into effect in January 2021.

The Enterprise Zone sites below will welcome new businesses that will begin operating from:

- Jade Business Park (County Durham)
- IAMP (Sunderland and South Tyneside)
- Newcastle International Airport (Newcastle).

Update on schemes:

- Jade Business Park is now home to Sumitomo and CoreHaus
- IAMP welcomed a further 50 jobs, bringing the total to 120 jobs
- Bellway Homes opened its new headquarters at Newcastle Airport.

Have significant infrastructure works underway or complete on four more Enterprise Zone sites, that will be ready to secure private sector investment at:

- Holborn 2 (South Tyneside)
- Ashwood Business Park (Northumberland)
- Port of Sunderland (Sunderland)
- Northumberland Energy Park (Northumberland).

All projects are underway:

- Site works are underway at Holborn 2, with an announcement that a joint venture between SSE and Equinor will set up an offshore wind Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Base
- Ashwood Business Park has started infrastructure work and is expecting occupiers to begin works during 2021/22
- Port of Sunderland has completed elements of the site infrastructure
- Progress has been made on Northumberland Energy Park, with infrastructure works planning to be completed during 2021/22.

By March 2021, our Enterprise Zone sites will become home to more than 400 jobs with £15m of North East LEP investment, unlocking 34.7ha of remediated land and more than £12 million of private sector investment.

During the last 12 months our 21 Enterprise Zones became home to five more businesses, creating 201 jobs. This brings the total number of businesses located on the Enterprise Zone sites to 59, collectively employing more than 1,800 people.

Coordinate partners to develop a regional project pipeline based on spatial economic priorities:	Develop a strategic project pipeline for the North East, building on the work carried out during the development of the Local Industrial Strategy, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan and LGF pipeline.	<p>In partnership with the LA7, we have updated the regional strategic project pipeline and developed a proposal for an accelerated project development fund.</p> <p>The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan was supported through a £5 million Rapid Response Fund made available from existing LEP resources. The fund helped 12 initiatives that included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) infrastructure programme that is supporting a 14-strong VCSE led capital project to enhance green community infrastructure and learning facilities for young people • An extension of the Scaleup North East business support initiative for a further two years • An innovation COVID-19 challenge programme. <p>The resources collectively supported more than 200 business and voluntary sector led projects.</p>
Secure additional investment in the North East including resources to support the Regional Recovery Plan:	Work with our partners and coordinate regional bid activity to secure funding for the region including the Growth Funds to support the regional economic recovery. Manage the Getting Building Fund and award £47 million to projects across the North East by October 2020 for delivery up to March 2022.	<p>We approved projects to the value of £47 million from the Getting Building Fund during 2020/21 with 14 projects contracted and in progress. The remainder will be contracted early in 2021/22.</p> <p>We provided support to a regional Freeports bid to government in February 2021.</p>
	Make preparations to maximise draw upon ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds) national reserve fund from 2020 onwards across the North East LEP area.	We continue to provide the regional coordination to draw any remaining European Funds into the region. In 2020/21 we secured £29.1 million of European Structural Funds.
	Secure a commercial property fund model, by using the North East Investment Fund (NEIF) funding and commence a procurement of a fund manager by the end of March 2021.	<p>We have completed an evaluation of the NEIF programme and obtained government approval to release the NEIF from all contractual obligations linked to the £30 million Rural Growth Fund grant and re-invest it into the Commercial Property Fund (CPIF).</p> <p>We are ready to issue the procurement for a fund manager and secured £2.2 million GBF and NEIF resource to support three CPIF pilot projects. We have also developed a pipeline of CPIF projects.</p>
Increased access to finance for businesses to invest:	Work with the North East Fund to maximise its investment potential for North East SMEs.	We continue to work closely with and advise the North East Fund non-executive board and executives to ensure investment is optimised and receive regular reports on KPIs.
	Support North East Finance and North East Access to Finance to optimise use of legacy funding to support North East initiatives.	We continue to work closely with legacy fund organisations to scope out and mobilise the future investment funding landscape for the region.

Policy, strategy, evidence and analysis

Activity	Key deliverables - What we will deliver between April 2020 and March 2021	Progress
<p>We will continue to develop and integrate the suite of strategic documents in the region which take forward the ambitions of the North East Strategic Economic Plan:</p>	<p>Develop and implement the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, working with regional partners through the North East COVID-19 Economic Response Group.</p>	<p>The North East COVID-19 Economic Response Group was formed in March 2020 to co-ordinate the region's immediate and longer-term economic response. This focused on developing and maintaining a strong intelligence base about the impact of COVID-19 throughout the pandemic to inform decision making, supporting businesses with advice and funding, developing action to support the labour market, driving innovation action to support national priorities and solve regional challenges, and communicating effectively with a single voice.</p> <p>The plan can be viewed here.</p>
	<p>Complete the discussions with government to publish the proposals set out in the North East Local Industrial Strategy.</p>	<p>Work on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) was close to completion when COVID-19 emerged, which led to publication being paused. Government archived the Industrial Strategy and its associated programmes at the March 2021 budget, signalling that this work is unlikely to be taken forward.</p> <p>Many of the programmes and projects set out in the draft North East LIS now feature in the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan and will remain priorities for inclusion in future strategy development.</p>
	<p>Work with the North East Transport Sub-Committee to develop the Regional Transport Plan to be launched in 2021.</p>	<p>The North East LEP is a member of the Transport Strategy Board and the Transport Plan Steering Group, providing direction and alignment with the wider programmes within the Strategic Economic Plan. We contributed to the policy and evidence that informed the North East Transport Plan and facilitated workshops with the Transport Strategy Team to explore opportunities for alignment with sector growth and innovation through digitalisation and de-carbonisation of the transport system.</p>
	<p>Collaborate with the North of Tyne and North East Combined Authorities to align and support their strategies and delivery plans.</p>	<p>We have worked with the combined authorities to ensure alignment of strategy, delivery and investment programmes and to work together on UK policy activities.</p> <p>We worked together, and with a wider range of partners from across the region, to monitor and respond to key public policy agendas, including EU Exit via the EU Exit Group which is co-funded by the two combined authorities and the North East LEP, and the development of the proposal for a regional Tourism Action Zone. We supported the development of the North of Tyne Combined Authority investment programme on digital, tourism and culture and energy, and provided analytical support to the North East Combined Authority economic statement. During the year, both combined authorities agreed to contribute to the development of the Energy Accelerator programme to ensure that more projects could be moved to delivery through the Energy for Growth programme.</p>

<p>We will continue to improve the relevance, quality and focus of analysis and research on the North East economy:</p>	<p>Provide timely, accurate and appropriate analysis of economic data to LEP staff, boards and partners to help inform decision making.</p>	<p>We actively promote the importance of evidence-led policy and strategy development and deliver a wide range of evidence projects to support the ongoing development of our programmes and inform the strategic direction of new activities.</p> <p>In the current year priorities have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates on indicators showing the impact of COVID-19 from data sources including ONS faster data, Google mobility, surveys, social listening, and consultation with regional stakeholders • Using intelligence to inform reports to the North East LEP Board, the Skills Advisory Panel and wider partners • Regular commentary and reporting on the key targets for the Strategic Economic Plan.
<p>Increase access to good quality, relevant economic analysis on the North East.</p>	<p>The North East Data Hub has expanded the range of data available and this now includes a lot more data at a local authority and constituency level.</p> <p>Engagement with the North East Data Hub has increased, with 7,500 unique page views in 2019/20 and 12,362 during 20/21.</p>	
<p>Publish the “Our Economy 2020” report by June 2020.</p>	<p>The annual Our Economy report for 2020 was published on 10 June, together with a video presentation from the LEP’s Senior Economist, in the absence of a face-to-face event. You can read the latest Our Economy here. It was downloaded 308 times between 10 June and 31 March 2021.</p>	
<p>Assist LEP staff, boards and partners to undertake research and evaluation that will inform their decision making.</p>	<p>We continue to support the commissioning and management of a range of research projects valuing £400,000, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and future skills need in the North East LEP area to support the decision making of the Skills Advisory Panel • Energy specific projects such as the opportunities surrounding mine energy and decarbonisation of heat • Support for the innovation programme on both performance information and key research projects • Intelligence and data development to support the North East trade and export strategy • Commissioning of strategic intelligence projects to support the region’s Freeport bid. 	
<p>Strengthen the North East Economic Evidence Forum’s role in ensuring evidence is informing the delivery of economic priorities of the region.</p>	<p>The North East Economic Evidence Forum continues to meet and contribute to our ongoing COVID-19 intelligence gathering and evidence base activities. However, there has been some disruption to the meeting programme due to COVID-19 and this will be regularised in 2021-22.</p> <p>The North East Data Hub now has a research repository and commentary where we are publishing and discussing regional research, including our COVID-19 intelligence reports.</p> <p>We have promoted evaluation across the LEP programmes and in new projects and continue to drive forward the interim evaluation of the Strategic Economic Plan which will complete at the end of 2021-22 bringing forward an interim assessment of the impact of the Strategic Economic Plan and proposals for a final summative evaluation.</p>	

Increase access to good quality, relevant research on the North East economy, including evaluation of interventions

The EU Exit Implementation Group continued to meet monthly to discuss business preparations for EU Transition, the impact of new trading arrangements with the EU, and opportunities arising from new domestic policies on funding, regulation and trade.

Intelligence from the Group on EU Transition and business feedback is shared with the Business Growth team for inclusion in the weekly reports to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The Group commissioned the North East LEP to co-ordinate a regional response to the Government's Freeports consultation in July 2020.

- The LEP established a working group with teams from the Port of Tyne and economic consultants to develop a collaborative regional Freeport bid following the publication of the Freeports Bid Prospectus in November 2020
- The working group arranged a series of workshops with regional stakeholders to inform the development of the bid. Regular updates on progress were delivered to Local Authority Economic Directors, Finance Directors, Political leaders and the LEP Board
- The final bid was submitted to the Government on 5 February 2021. Unfortunately, it was not selected as one of the eight Freeports awarded in the Government's competition despite being rated very highly in the formal assessment process across all criteria.

During the year, on behalf of the EU Exit Group, the North East LEP has also co-ordinated regional responses to domestic policy initiatives including on immigration policy, the shortage occupations list and the new subsidy control policy.

Continue to work collaboratively across the Northern Powerhouse region as a leading participant in the NP11, and within wider structures of cooperation; Provide NP11 leadership on Innovation, and participate actively in Net Zero and Trade and Investment workstreams; Develop new work on evidence and strategy with NP11 Secretariat; Coordinate the regional engagement with the Northern Powerhouse working with LA Economic Directors, North East Transport and Inward Investments Teams

The Northern Powerhouse Coordination Group has continued to meet to facilitate information sharing on strategic priorities across the Northern Powerhouse area. Membership of the group includes the Combined Authorities, Invest North East England, Transport North East and LEP programme leads.

We lead on the NP11 Innovation programme, preparing the content on innovation for the Manifesto for the North working with the NP11 Innovation leads group, and have continued to support NP11 research activities – for example with the Transport for the North and Innovation projects.

We have also been invited to lead NP11's evidence and research programme working with TFN and other northern partners and on behalf of the NP11 we launched a procurement opportunity in March 2021 to support the development of an NPH evidence programme.

We work on Net Zero/Energy with NP11, including through the North East, Yorkshire and Humber Local Energy Hub.

	<p>Develop a workstream in anticipation of Planning White Paper and response to National Infrastructure Commission</p> <p>Develop North East LEP policy positions with respect of devolution white paper and future regional governance and resourcing</p>	<p>The Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper, originally expected in Q4 2020, has been delayed and is now expected to be published in late 2021/2022. We continue to monitor devolution and regional policy, including reforms proposed in the Planning White Paper and the competitive infrastructure and regeneration funds announced at Budget 2020.</p>
<p>Continue to develop strategic initiatives in the region, including those which complement the areas of strategic importance (also see following section):</p>	<p>Work with partners in the tourism and culture sectors to support recovery of the sectors and promote long term growth</p>	<p>The North East LEP has continued to support partners to develop a regional plan to support growth and improvement in the tourism sector, building on work prepared for a Tourism Action Zone bid in response to the Tourism Sector Deal.</p> <p>A statement of intent for the future development of the sector in the region has been developed with the destination management organisations and North East Tourism Alliance and will be discussed by the LEP Board during 2021.</p>
	<p>Develop an integrated approach to internationalisation across trade, investment, tourism and education</p>	<p>We are working with the Department for International Trade and the North East England Chamber of Commerce to develop a trade and export strategy as part of a wider Northern Powerhouse programme across the 11 LEP areas. A first phase of work was completed in March 2021, published in May, and identifies current and opportunity areas for building trade volumes and proposed approaches to systematising advice and support to businesses at different stages of the exporting process. Work will continue in 2021/22 to develop more detailed strategic approaches and align the work with the forthcoming UK strategy. It will also aim to strengthen links with other international facing activities in the region.</p>
	<p>Support work to develop the capacity of key enabling sectors identified in the Strategic Economic Plan</p>	<p>Through the COVID-19 evidence base programme, work has been undertaken to engage with our enabling sectors in professional services, education, transport and construction to understand the impact of COVID-19 across the economy with reports published for each Board meeting.</p>

Areas of strategic importance: Digital, Energy, Health and Life Sciences, and Advanced Manufacturing

Activity	Key deliverables - What we will deliver between April 2020 and March 2021	Progress
<p>Continue to develop and implement the North East's Digital for Growth strategy launched in October 2019</p>	<p>Support and develop the work of the Digital Steering Group as the collaborative leadership structure overseeing delivery of the work programme</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to build and promote the regional evidence base around the digital sector through specific research projects and the communication of findings from all sources.</p> <hr/> <p>Develop the implementation plan and active pipeline of projects under the four Digital for Growth themes (Data, Workforce, Digital Collaboration and Enterprise, and Infrastructure and Connectivity) including those aligned with the COVID-19 recovery plan</p>	<p>The Digital Steering Group has continued to meet throughout the year to oversee the work of the Digital programme and has progressed work around four priority areas:</p> <p>Data: A draft paper was developed in partnership with the National Innovation Centre for Data exploring opportunities to leverage its role for the region.</p> <p>Digital Collaboration and Enterprise: A working group drawn from industry has produced proposals about strengthened tech start-up and incubation.</p> <p>Connectivity: We have worked strategically with the local authorities and Transport North East to develop the North East Connectivity Plan. This is a key part of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan and includes range of proposals for improving digital connectivity.</p> <p>Digital skills: Through the Skills Advisory Panel, we are supporting the development of skills projects aiming to promote digital inclusion across the region.</p> <p>We have supported the North of Tyne Digital Investment programme, ensuring that there is strong alignment between the investments made by the Combined Authority and the wider regional strategy.</p> <hr/> <p>We have delivered a collaborative assessment of Tech Startups in our region to inform future proposals that will enhance services to support tech startup and incubation.</p> <p>Research was commissioned to assess the digital development opportunities of the health service in the region working with the Academic Health Science Network and a range of other partners. This has resulted in the development of a proposal for a digital skills hub in the NHS.</p> <hr/> <p>We worked with the National Innovation Centre for Data to host a series of seminars to support the development of a working paper on smart data opportunities in the North East.</p> <p>As part of the North East Connectivity Strategy, a pipeline of capital projects was included to enhance digital connectivity and provide the basis for the acceleration of 5G.</p> <p>Through a series of collaborative workshops, we gathered intelligence about the impact of COVID-19 on the digital sector to assess the levels and quality of digital adoption created by the response to the pandemic. The outcomes of these events featured in the North East COVID-19 Economic Response Group intelligence reports.</p>

Develop an agreed communications plan to promote Digital development in the region focused on evidence, delivery plans and implementation actions.

Progress has been made working with the Digital Steering Group to translate the Digital Strategy into delivery, with a number of communications opportunities identified.

Continue to drive growth in the North East's energy sector through the implementation of the Energy for Growth strategy launched in August 2019:

Help ensure active governance and coordination for energy activity through the:

- Offshore energy and subsea technology hub, joint work with the Energi Coast cluster, and other sector initiatives
- Energy Catalyst partnership
- North East, Yorkshire and Humber Local Energy Hub

We have maintained a key role in the overall governance and coordination of energy sector partnerships and networks:

- We host the Offshore and Subsea Hub which brings together senior leaders in the region to assess opportunities for the North East offshore and subsea sector. This group has influenced the development of the Energi Coast cluster management group and proposals to government, led by Subsea UK, for the initiation of a joint Global Underwater Hub with Aberdeen and the Solent LEP. We also coordinated regional submissions into national calls for evidence such as for Offshore Wind Manufacturing Hubs.
- We are an active member of Energi Coast, the North East's offshore wind cluster. We act as a member of the cluster management group which provides strategic direction and governance for the cluster. We also participate in the industry group and innovation sub-group which coordinate activities in supply chain development, promotion and innovation respectively, and we are leading a skills sub group for the cluster.
- We are leading and coordinating the North East Energy Catalyst, a collaboration uniting the region's world class energy innovation and demonstration assets and capabilities to drive a series of joint delivery projects, innovation challenges and support partners to secure investment. Two projects identified through the Catalyst secured funding from the Getting Building Fund.
- We are a member of the North East & Yorkshire BEIS Local Energy Hub coordinating collaboration across the local energy strategies in the six member LEP areas, and providing governance; particularly for delivery of BEIS programmes which are deployed via the Hub. This has helped develop a substantial pipeline of energy projects across this wider geography. The North East LEP is also leading two projects on behalf of the Hub, one on Mine Energy in which we are co-ordinating a national Mine Energy Task Force, and a Local Energy Skills hub working in partnership with the Energy Systems Catapult. The North East LEP has facilitated the region's seven Local Authorities to secure over £17m to invest in energy efficiency in social housing through the Hub's LAD2 programme.
- We host one of the two officers driving the government's Rural Community Energy programme via the North East & Yorkshire BEIS Local Energy Hub, which has distributed £518,305.75 to local energy projects in rural communities during the year.

Support growth of an active offshore energy and subsea technology cluster. Promoting the findings of commissioned research, representing the region, and supporting inward investment and supply chain development activity working with TVCA and other partners.

A strong track record of delivery has been built in supporting the offshore energy and subsea technology sectors in the region. During the year we have:

- Provided funding to the Energi Coast cluster, alongside TVCA and industry
- Supported successful inward investments into the sector, such as the SSE and Equinor Dogger Bank operations base on the Tyne
- Coordinate regional submissions into national infrastructure investment opportunities, such as the Offshore Wind Manufacturing Hubs call for information
- Funded the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult's 'Technology, Innovation & Green Growth for Offshore Renewables' programme, alongside NTCA and the Offshore Wind Growth partnership
- Allocated funding via the Getting Building Fund to support the creation of a new Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) Test Site at the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult in Blyth
- Coordinated various skills interventions between industry and skills and training providers to develop skills pathways for the sector
- Actively supported the development and implementation of the Global Underwater Hub, ensuring its integration into wider North East cluster activity.

Drive forward the work of the North East Energy Catalyst partnership, facilitating delivery of ambitious projects and programmes which showcase solutions to global energy challenges in the North East, while stimulating growth and supporting green recovery.

The North East Energy Catalyst has facilitated the world's first £9 million multi-site Smart Energy Lab and secured £5m funding from Getting Building Fund for the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult in Blyth and the InTEGReL customer energy village project in Gateshead.

The Energy Catalyst also led an Energy Innovation Challenge Programme supporting regional SMEs to bring forward solutions to global energy challenges. £200,000 has been awarded to 10 regional SMEs to develop new materials, digital solutions and prototypes to drive decarbonisation.

Accelerate delivery of local and regional energy schemes, including those aligned with the COVID-19 recovery plan, taking opportunities resulting from North East engagement in the BEIS Local Energy Hub, and other national and regional programmes.

The North East LEP has proactively supported the regional energy project pipeline including:

- Facilitating rural community groups to access £518,000 of feasibility funding for energy projects
- Pooling £2.3 million of funding with Local and Combined Authority partners to create a new regional resource to accelerate project development
- Supporting development of regional district energy (including mine energy schemes) which have resulted in significant funding awards for delivery
- Developing a high potential opportunity proposition with the Department for International Trade, which supports inward investment activity in the Heat Network Sector
- Commissioning a study to detail the future supply chain opportunities in heat decarbonisation for the region's supply chain.

Integrate Energy for Growth and its priorities with wider North East LEP strategies and delivery programmes, the work of our Combined and Local Authorities and wider business and academic communities.

The Energy for Growth programme has continued to be well integrated across wider North East LEP delivery programmes and partners, including working with:

- The LEP Investment team to deliver the Local Growth Fund Energy for Growth funding programme with a value of £6 million, and two Getting Building Fund projects.
- The LEP Skills team to develop sector specific interventions in the offshore wind, EV and battery, and retrofit sectors.
- The LEP Business Growth team to provide targeted support to energy sector SMEs via the Catalyst innovation challenge programme.
- The LEP Innovation team to support IDPs and priority projects in the energy sector, particularly via the Catalyst.
- North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) to support policy development and alignment of funding programmes with the Energy for Growth Strategy.
- Industry and cluster bodies such as NOF, the North East Automotive Alliance, Subsea UK, Subsea North East and the Association for Decentralised Energy to represent the region's economic priorities and support sector development.
- Partners within the Borderlands Growth Deal, particularly Northumberland County Council, as a member of the energy masterplanning board.
- A range of cross-sector partners through the Catalyst, specifically to coordinate energy innovation activity.

Develop and launch a strategy for the Health and Life Sciences sector in the region

Work with the Health and Life Sciences Steering Group (HLSSG) to bring forward an evidence-based framework for growth document based on the evidence and agreed vision, objectives and ambitions of the HLSSG, which will enable the North East LEP to refine the strategy development in the context of the emerging COVID-19 Recovery Plan opportunities.

We have worked with the North East Health and Life Sciences Steering Group and wider partners to develop and publish The Health, Life Sciences and Medicines Manufacturing Strategy in February 2021. You can view the strategy [here](#).

Actions taken to develop and mobilise the strategy have included:

- A full review of data and evidence about North East health and life sciences capability and the assessment of opportunities and challenges in the UK policy framework
- Analytical work to model future growth opportunities and to set down key growth targets for the sector
- Consultation and engagement through the Health and Life Sciences Steering Group and through discussion at the 2020 BioFocus event
- Commissioning of seven pipeline development projects to support the strategy through the securing of £300,000 of LGF and allocation of these funds to develop business cases which will be submitted by June 2021.

We worked with partners to support businesses in the region to connect to national programmes to strengthen the supply of PPE and ventilators.

Additional deliverables from The Health, Life Sciences and Medicines Manufacturing Strategy include:

- Analysis of the skills need of North East pharmaceuticals businesses. You can review the report [here](#). This has led to the introduction of a life sciences skills group to enable collaboration between employers and education to address skills shortages in the sector.
- Sponsorship of and active participation in the annual BioFocus conference, attended by 300 delegates.
- Working with partners to secure a High Potential Opportunity on ageing, which is now being progressed actively with the Department for International Trade.

Establish a 'Patent Protection Scheme' to support the Life Sciences businesses in the region to survive the impact of Covid 19, thereby stabilising the strategically important business base and assure ongoing and future growth (subject to funding).

- As part of the £5m COVID-19 Response Fund, we launched the Patent Protection Scheme to support innovative businesses to protect their intellectual property during NHS disruption because of COVID-19. A total of £213,279 was distributed in grants to 13 innovative businesses.
-

	Identify partners to position the North East to take advantage of the re-shoring opportunities for the pharma sector created by COVID-19 and develop the North Shoring proposal and business case to position the North East as the lead location to catalyse this opportunity on behalf of the UK (which will strengthen the supply chain and provide opportunities for process industries and identify inward investment opportunities).	We provided support for the creation of North East Pharma as a sector leadership structure. We are working together on a north shoring proposition for generic medicine manufacture with the NHS.
	Through the Local Growth Fund, support the Steering group and regional partners to develop a future pipeline of activities which can support delivery of the strategy.	We secured an LGF allocation of £300K to enable the development of detailed business cases for key projects aligned with the health and life sciences strategy including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Digital Skills Hub (phase 2) with AHSN NENC 2 NE Health Evaluation Eco System with AHSN NENC 3 Centre for Health Data with Durham University 4 Early Diagnostics Institute with Turbinia Ltd 5 Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Study with NEPIC 6 Securing the generics supply chain for the NHS with North East Pharma 7 Collaboration with Newcastle International Airport on a project to assess opportunities to enhance freight connectivity for the sector.
Advanced Manufacturing	Develop co-ordination structures and capacity within the North East LEP to support growth and diversification of North East Advanced Manufacturing	<p>We have continued to invest in manufacturing through the North East Enterprise Zone and LGF. This has been into sites and infrastructure that can host and support supply chain growth in automotive, pharmaceuticals and offshore energy manufacturing.</p> <p>The North East Automotive Alliance remains a driver of key innovation projects including Driving the Industrial Revolution and, a programme to promote Driverless vehicles.</p> <p>We have supported the focus on opportunities to foster growth in pharmaceutical manufacturing within the health and life sciences strategy. Key activities include assessment of opportunities to homeshore generics manufacturing, through the project being led by North East Pharma and an associated project to assess the supply chain which would be required which is being led by NEPIC.</p>
	Develop our infrastructure, innovation and trade facilitation initiatives to support growth and develop in North East Advanced Manufacturing	Resources have been secured to recruit a sector lead to take this work forward. This strategic work will commence in October 2021.

Promote the Made Smarter programme, promoting industrial digitalisation, as part of a wider approach to Digital Adoption within the region.

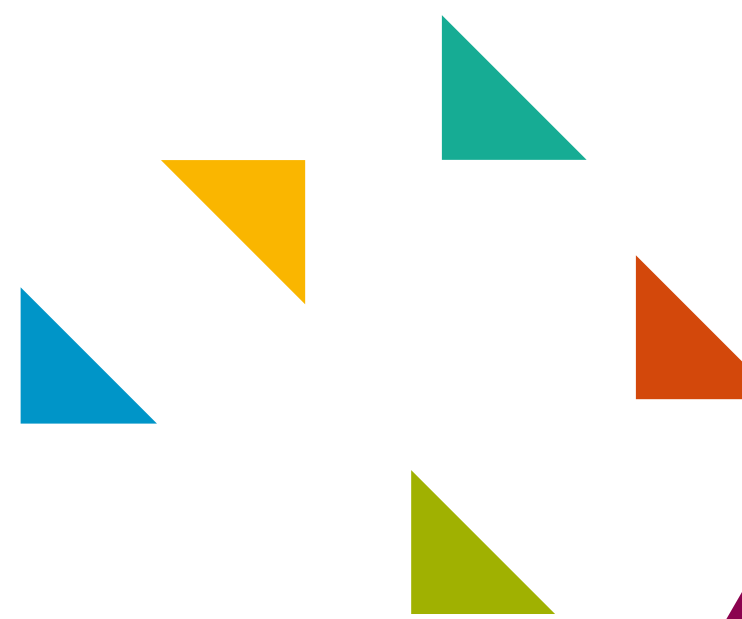
The North East LEP and Tees Valley Combined Authority secured £600K in Q4 from the Made Smarter programme to deliver a digital adoption programme in North East manufacturing sectors with the expectation of a further funding from the CSR. This will also provide capacity within the team to resource the development of our Advanced Manufacturing strategy.

Governance

Activity	Key deliverables - What we will deliver between April 2020 and March 2021	Progress
Continue to implement the LEP Review recommendations:	Update the constitution to reflect the LEP Review changes by end of May 2020.	The revised constitution approved at the board meeting in May 2020 can be viewed here .
	Update the Assurance Framework to reflect our accountable body transfer by August 2020.	The Assurance Framework was updated and remains compliant with national assurance framework guidelines. You can review the Assurance Framework here .
	Utilise communications plans to encourage engagement with LEP corporate documents increase downloads of the North East Strategic Economic Plan, Annual Review and Our Economy by 10%.	<p>The Strategic Economic Plan was downloaded 911 times – a fall of 33.65% compared to 2019-20</p> <p>The Annual review was downloaded 149 times compared to 5 times for the previous year's document (A 2880% increase)</p> <p>Our Economy was downloaded 192 times following its publication.</p>
	The LEP's social media following on Twitter increased by 17.7% to 11,416 during 2019/20 and increased engagements by 40.8% to 26,086. We will increase both followers and engagements by a further 15%.	<p>Twitter followers increased by 8.4% to 12,376 followers, engagements increased by 10.4%.</p> <p>LinkedIn followers increased by 57.1% to 3,889 during 2020/21 and engagements increased by 61.8% to 5,604.</p>
	Recruit a new Chair for the North East LEP Board transparently and in a way that follows due process and diligence by July 2020.	We recruited Lucy Winskell OBE as Board Chair following an open and transparent recruitment process. Lucy was formally appointed to the North East LEP board in September 2020.
	Hold a public Annual General Meeting.	Our Annual General Meeting was held on 24 November 2020 as an online event due to COVID-19 and was attended by 292 guests. The presentation given at the AGM can be viewed here .
Continue the evaluation of the Strategic Economic Plan delivery:	Deliver the final year of the interim external evaluation of the Strategic Economic Plan with Steer-ED consultants.	As part of the final year of the interim evaluation project, Steer-ED have reviewed our programme level data, consulted with programmes of delivery and conducted a specific deep dive into the regional response to COVID-19. The final report will set out an interim evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the SEP and our programmes of delivery and recommendations for the final summative evaluation as the 10 year period of the SEP is concluded. It will also provide recommendations for future evaluation activities in relation to future funding streams and strategy development in the light of the new Green Book. The final report of the interim project will be published in complete by the end of July 2021.

	Collate and review performance data about existing projects, highlight specific best practice case studies and make recommendations to support improvement in programme management and project delivery.	As part of the final evaluation, Steer-ED have reviewed our programme and project level data to understand performance and impact to date. They have identified some areas for improvement which will be picked up internally by a cross team working group, reviewing our data management processes.
	Set out an indicative framework and recommendations for data collation and measuring impact in light of future funding streams.	This will be picked up in the 2021/22 as Steer-ED will be hosting a workshop with our delivery teams and setting out a framework for further data collation and evaluation activities.
	Support embedding evaluative practice across the programmes and projects in preparation for the final evaluation of the Strategic Economic Plan to be commissioned at the end of the year for the period of 2021-24.	Many of our teams have built in evaluation activities into their programmes of work. For example, we are currently undertaking a mid-term evaluation of our LGF and EZ programmes and an evaluation of our how Growth Hub responded to the EU transition and COVID-19.
Implement North East LEP Accountable Body transfer from North East Combined Authority to North of Tyne Combined Authority:	Set up all practical arrangements under the new Service Level Agreements for 2020-21 by end of June 2020.	Service Level Agreements were put in place to ensure the different services provided were carried out. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Services • Insurance • Legal and Governance services • Human Resources • Treasury Management • Financial and Accounting Services • Internal Audit • Procurement • Funding Programmes and Projects • ICT Services • North East Investment Fund, Financial Management • Information Governance and Data Protection
	Review and agree update LEP Scheme of Delegation by end of May 2020.	The Scheme of Delegation was updated and will be taken to the LEP Board in May 2021. This can be viewed here .
	Put in place all LEP / NTCA policies and procedures by end of June 2020 and ensure all relevant documentation is on the North East LEP website by end of July 2020.	Policies and procedures were put in place and made available to the team.
	Agree SLA for 2021/22 by January 2021 to feed into 2022/23 budget preparation.	The SLA provision for 2021/22 are finalised and will be reviewed quarterly.

North East
Local Enterprise Partnership



North East Local Enterprise Partnership

1 St James Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AD | **Tel** 0191 561 5420 | **Email** info@nelep.co.uk | [@northeastlep](https://twitter.com/northeastlep)



northeastlep.co.uk



North East
Growth Hub

northeastgrowthhub.co.uk



North East
Data Hub

northeastdatahub.co.uk



North East
Ambition

northeastambition.co.uk