



News Autumn 2016



SKILLS AND INFRASTRUCTURE BROUGHT INTO SHARPER FOCUS

Since our last update via Cumbria LEP's annual report which we published over the summer, there has been a lot of development activity, especially in terms of skills and infrastructure within the county.

A range of new facilities have opened their doors in September and October, including the Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Centre at Furness College, new STEM facilities for the University of Cumbria, and the sheep husbandry training centre at Newton Rigg College. You can read about these in more detail later in this newsletter.

The investments we have been able to make in each of these projects is helping training providers across the county to increase capacity and extend their offer. They are vital mechanisms for ensuring that we meet the growing demand for highly-skilled workers, and that our local workforce has the appropriate skill sets to fill new jobs. This is equally beneficial for employers too and we are using employer panels as a primary tool to ensure skills training provision is fit for purpose.

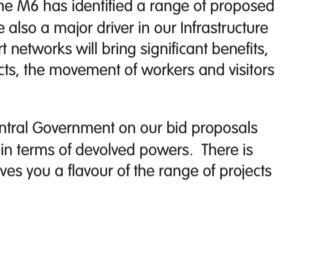
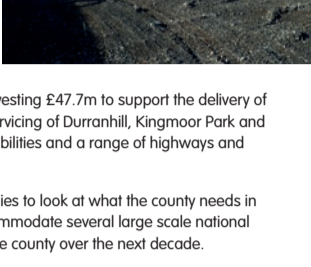
Under Cumbria's current Growth Deal, we are already investing £47.7m to support the delivery of these developments and many others such as the site servicing of Durranhill, Kingmoor Park and Barrow Waterfront. Additional superfast broadband capabilities and a range of highways and cycling improvements are also being delivered.

Meanwhile, we have been undertaking a number of studies to look at what the county needs in terms of infrastructure and improved connectivity to accommodate several large scale national investments such as Moorside which will be coming to the county over the next decade.

Our detailed and award winning study of roads west of the M6 has identified a range of proposed improvements, and enhancements to our rail network are also a major driver in our Infrastructure Plan published earlier in the year. Improving our transport networks will bring significant benefits, by increasing capacity to support major investment projects, the movement of workers and visitors to the county, and supply chain and employment growth.

Later in the autumn, we are looking to hear back from central Government on our bid proposals for the next round of Growth Deal funding and our future in terms of devolved powers. There is plenty to be optimistic about and I hope this newsletter gives you a flavour of the range of projects which are helping to boost Cumbria's economic output.

George Beveridge, Chair, Cumbria LEP



For all the latest developments, visit the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership website at www.cumbrialep.co.uk

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CENTRES FOR HIGH TECH SKILLS AND TRAINING

The new Advanced Manufacturing Centres at Furness and Carlisle Colleges, the first of their kind in Cumbria, are to offer state-of-the-art training facilities to give students access to the latest high-tech equipment and machinery.

The £4 million centre at Furness College is now enabling students to develop skills on real-life projects for companies ranging from major employers to SMEs. It includes a simulated production line for the study of materials, learning hub, computer-aided design classrooms and an industrial-size workshop.

Funded with £1.43 million via Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, the 1,663 square metre facility has classroom space for up to 450 higher education students and 1,150 apprentices on science, technology and engineering apprenticeships and HNC and degree programmes in engineering manufacturing and electrical and electronic engineering.

The idea is to prepare tomorrow's engineers and technicians for the workplace and enable current workers to retrain and enhance their skills.

Meanwhile the new centre at Carlisle College, which comprises of a high tech refurbishment of its existing engineering department, will open early in 2017. It includes a simulated production line for training and has been designed with input on layout from key local advanced manufacturing firms such as Pirelli Tyres and Cadworks.

A particular, and not exclusive focus, will be placed upon the food and drink sector with the likes of McVities, Calder Foods and Princes Foods on the doorstep.

Supported with £1m in regional growth funding via Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, the centre will deliver an integrated, employer led curriculum at all levels in the engineering, manufacturing and processing sectors. It will cover three distinct disciplines: Manufacturing & Fabrication, Process & Control, and Design & Prototyping.

The new centres have been designed to focus on science, technology, engineering and maths related disciplines and to help more local people gain the skills and qualifications they need to access new jobs in advanced manufacturing, nuclear and biopharmaceuticals. They will also help provide technology led businesses with a supply of skilled staff.



NEWTON RIGG BRINGS PERFECT MIX FOR RURAL AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Newton Rigg College in Penrith is rapidly becoming one of the most influential training providers in Cumbria.

Earlier this year, the college opened a dedicated overhead power line engineering training centre in partnership with SPIE, one of the largest national Overhead Line Engineering businesses, to tackle the industry's skills gap.

The three-year placement course follows a nationally recognised Level-3 Training Programme designed specifically for apprentices. It includes training in a purpose built and designed training facilities.

Newton Rigg College's sheep husbandry centre at Low Beckside Farm, Mungrisdale, is a national showcase for the best hill farming practice, ensuring young people have the key skills they need as the industry's future workforce.

The 36m x 25m x 2.95m centre is at the heart of the farmstead and will be used throughout the year, particularly for students' practical teaching. Alongside the specialist courses for students, it will host farm events and demonstration activities within uplands agriculture and sheep management to show best practice and encourage professional development.



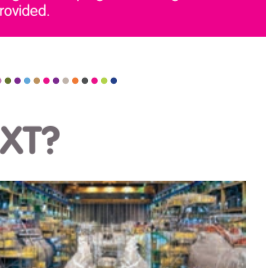
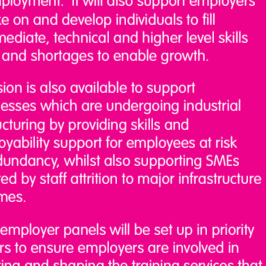
NEW PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE BRIDGE AT CURROCK IN CARLISLE

The new pedestrian and cycle bridge, which connects Currock and Denton Holme across the Carlisle Coast Rail Line between Lund Crescent and Bousteads Grassing, is now open in Carlisle.

The new bridge connects the existing footpath on the Denton Holme side via a ramped walkway, providing full access to pedestrians, cyclists and disabled wheelchair users.

It also provides a continuous cycle link from Currock along the River Caldew north to Carlisle City Centre and south to Dalston.

The bridge project forms part of a £7.8 million programme of investment in transport and infrastructure in Cumbria, secured by Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and Cumbria County Council.



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NEW STEM LABS AT UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA



Students at the University of Cumbria are now benefiting from extended laboratory facilities to support science, technology, engineering and maths disciplines.

The University of Cumbria's new STEM labs at the Fusehill Campus in Carlisle have been brought on stream to ensure that greater numbers of students can study for degree-level qualifications in science subjects in Cumbria.

With £784,000 from Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, the university has invested £3.5 million in science teaching and research laboratories to respond to a national shortage of graduates with specific science skills, to support regional industry requiring skilled staff and to create more opportunities for young people to participate in science subjects in the local area.

These bespoke teaching and research facilities have been created in direct response to the increased need for biosciences graduates in Cumbria and an increase in demand from Sellafield for analytical scientists. They will enable the university to enhance its current science curriculum offer, and allow it to expand its science portfolio by offering degree-level qualifications in chemistry and biomedical science.

PRIORITY ROAD PROJECTS IDENTIFIED

An award winning study of Cumbria's major roads has identified 38 priority improvement schemes which need to be carried out for the county to fulfil its economic potential.

The findings are part of the West of M6 Strategic Connectivity Study which has been published by Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and Highways England after consultation with a wide range of local businesses, organisations and road users.

This study is important because it provides the evidence base to support the county in its bids for government funding for road improvements. It builds on our Infrastructure Plan, which was published earlier in the year.

The study has identified priority improvement schemes for the county's major roads which would support economic growth, improve road use for tourists, reduce delays and accidents, improve the road system's resilience to severe weather and roadworks, and minimise the environmental impact of traffic.

It will be used as evidence to support bids for funding for road improvements from government, including the Highways England National Road Investment Strategy in 2019. It will also be used to highlight to large companies the advantages of making financial contributions to the cost of improving local roads.

The West of M6 Strategic Connectivity Study won the 2016 Project of the Year accolade at the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) North East & Cumbria awards.

NEW CONTRACT TO INSPIRE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A project offering funded training opportunities focusing on workforce development within Cumbrian SMEs, together with additional support to recruit apprentices via an impartial brokerage service, has been given the go ahead.

Carlisle College has been awarded £8.5m to deliver the project, which will run to March 2018. It has been funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership.

The college will lead a consortium of partners to raise skills levels and reduce skills gaps, including Cumbria Business Growth Hub, the University of Cumbria, Furness College, Kendal College, Lakes College, Newton Rigg College, Gen2 and SP Training.

The project will provide individuals with opportunities to develop the skills to progress in employment. It will also support employers to take on and develop individuals to fill intermediate, technical and higher level skills gaps and shortages to enable growth.

Provision is also available to support businesses which are undergoing industrial restructuring by providing skills and employability support for employees at risk of redundancy, whilst also supporting SMEs affected by staff attrition to major infrastructure schemes.

Eight employer panels will be set up in priority sectors to ensure employers are involved in directing and shaping the training services that are provided.

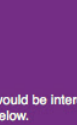
WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT?

The latest round of Growth Deal bids have been submitted to central Government. Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership is initially seeking approximately £165m under its proposed Growth Deal 3 bid to support a transformational new pipeline of proposals to boost the local economy.

If successful, it would deliver over 5,500 jobs and key projects prioritised to bring the greatest benefit to the local economy. They include major investments in nuclear technology, agriculture, tourism, skills, sites and transport infrastructure, improving connectivity and flood resilience.

Our high level bid is of course subject to ongoing discussion and negotiation – and it is a step up from previous levels. Whilst the funding figures we are submitting are ambitious and represent a significant commitment, we have also clearly set out the wider range of economic benefits they will bring.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership also continues to play an active role with local authorities in ongoing negotiations with central government to secure a package of devolved powers for strategic growth. If we can secure greater control over our resources, we will be better placed to ensure that the strategic economic plan for Cumbria becomes a reality.



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