

Digital for Growth

The North East's Digital Strategy



What is Digital for Growth?

Digital for Growth is the North East's Digital Strategy. It has been developed by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), together with its partners. We recognise that digital is critical to the development of our economy in the broadest sense. Digital for Growth acknowledges the ubiquity of 'digital' and the challenges of defining it as a single sector.

We will focus on developing a pipeline of activity that aligns to the national digital agenda. We'll review and refine our priorities continually to reflect emerging opportunities and challenges, and leverage investment for our region. Ongoing partnership working will be critical in delivering this strategy, through shared coordination and leadership both regionally, nationally and with government.

We will develop and articulate the sub-sectors of our digital economy, to highlight our capabilities and areas of specialism that could contribute to the delivery of more and better jobs.

We want to take our assets and position ourselves as a demonstrator in the broader digitalisation of industry and society, focusing on cross-cutting digital adoption, transformation and skills development.

How does Digital for Growth fit with the North East Strategic Economic Plan?

The North East Strategic Economic Plan has been in place since 2014 and details how we will achieve our aim of adding 100,000 more and better jobs to the regional economy by 2024.

The Strategic Economic Plan identifies digital as an area of strategic importance - an area where we perform strongly and that offers opportunities to contribute to the delivery of more and better jobs.

Digital for Growth builds on the evidence base and assets set out in the North East Strategic Economic Plan. It identifies priorities where we can develop programmes of work to strengthen the economy.

The North East digital landscape

Digital for Growth has been developed to incorporate the whole of the digital ecosystem which is complex and diverse.



Our digital sector is made up of internationally renowned large companies that are major employers and have considerable supply chains, as well as SME's and micro businesses.



Some of our digital businesses have a focus on products, others on services.



Our digital economy is made up of established agencies and service providers as well as high growth, innovation-led tech start-ups.



Businesses and organisations across all sectors are increasingly adopting technological solutions to improve productivity and processes through digital transformation.



We have several hubs and networks, each with their own identity, funding sources and memberships. Collectively they contribute to our compelling support offer, especially when coordinated and presented as being greater than the sum of its parts.

Our vision

To present a collaborative, cohesive and ambitious North East digital economy that is leading the digitalisation of industry. We want the impact of this to improve the quality of life for the people who live, work, study and visit the North East and for the businesses who invest and trade here.

What are we going to do?

We have identified four immediate areas of priority, where we can add value and contribute to delivering our vision, by building on our assets and capabilities.

1

Data

We have a rich R&D base in data science and data analytics, potentially giving the North East distinct global advantage. We want to raise awareness of this nationally and internationally, and maximise market opportunities. We also want to enable regional businesses to use this asset to identify routes to data-led growth.

2

Infrastructure and connectivity

We want to ensure that the entire region is fully enabled with the best possible digital infrastructure and connectivity so that no business or community is restricted by provision.

3

Digital collaboration and enterprise

The North East has a strong and demonstrable track record in design, innovation and creativity. This has resulted in a strong tech community which is driven, passionate and entrepreneurial. We want to see more of this and develop the region's tech start-ups through maximising cross-sectoral collaboration and raising the profile of our tech sector with investors. We want to strengthen the relationship between creativity and innovation to encourage the translation of ideas into new products, solutions and businesses.

4

Workforce

We will explore and challenge breadth and complexity of the *digital skills gap* – for our workers, learners and citizens. We want to build an inclusive and resilient labour market by addressing skills shortages through the three strands of education, business and society. We want to broaden understanding and ownership of challenges and make careers in digital attractive and possible for all.

Find out more

Find out more about Digital for Growth at northeastlep.co.uk

If you would like to be involved, contribute and collaborate on the delivery of Digital for Growth, please get in touch:



Laura Partridge

Digital Programme Lead
North East Local Enterprise Partnership

+44 0191 561 5462 | +44 07500 096059 | Laura.Partridge@nelep.co.uk