

2021-2023 LCR Digital Strategy Action Plan



denotes that project requires all or part capital funding; all other projects are revenue only

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	LEAD (body & person)	PARTNERS	TOTAL COST	FUNDING SOURCES (& individual contributions)	STATUS & START (live - advanced development - early development - concept)
Theme 1: Digital Connectivity & Infrastructure						
1.1 Build, operate & maintain a fibre backhaul network across the Liverpool City Region by 2023, & accelerate local gigabit rollout						
1. Establish commercial JV partnership	Form a commercial partnership to install, operate and maintain the new 200+km fibre network across the LCR.	CA – Lorna Rogers	JV partner, Local Authorities	Circa £30M	CA, private sector	Live
2. Dig Once project #	Make opportunities re. other infrastructure/engineering works across the LCR to also deploy ducting while roads/paths are dug up, in order to save time, money and disruption.	CA – Lorna Rogers	JV partner, Local Authorities, utility companies	£1.2M	CA	Live
3. Local loop development in all 6 local authority areas #	Accelerate the development and delivery of local access networks across the 6 individual Local Authority areas.	Local Authorities	CA, JV partner, other network providers	tbd	tbd	Early development
4. Digital connectivity publicity programme	Branding and communications campaign(s) to explain the practicalities and benefits of all aspects of the digital connectivity programme and associated infrastructure works to both residents and businesses.	CA – Lorna Rogers	JV partner, Local Authorities, 5G testbed	tbd	tbd	Early development
1.2 Maximise 5G connectivity & 5G-fibre backhaul integration						
5. Liverpool 5G Create: Connecting Health & Social Care #	This will develop an independent 5G network for health and social care services in selected areas of Liverpool, scaling out the initial 5G testbed, and as part of a DCMS national programme. The network will reduce digital poverty for vulnerable people, provide safe, free and accessible connectivity to public services across health, social care, and education, and establish a new transferable commercial model.	Liverpool City Council (LCC) – Ann Williams	UoL, LJMU, NHS, BluWireless, private sector	£7.2M	DCMS, LCC, NHS	Live
6. Liverpool 5G Scale Out #	Explore the potential and viability of extending the LCC/NHS-led 5G mesh network and health/care/education programme across a wider Liverpool/LCR footprint.	LCC – Ann Williams	Local Authorities, CA, UoL, LJMU, NHS, BluWireless, private sector	tbd	tbd	Concept
7. Coordinate fixed & wireless digital infrastructure approaches	Facilitate and reinforce collective “barrier busting” approaches, plus explore the establishment of an agreed, standardised pan-LCR approach to commercially charging external bodies for access/use of publicly owned fibre, 4G & 5G infrastructure assets. to support the rollout of both fixed and wireless networks.	CA – Lorna Rogers	Local Authorities, private sector	tbd	tbd	Early development

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1.3 Develop & deliver projects to exploit wider opportunities offered by enhanced digital infrastructure						
8. L51 Campus - Datacentre & Innovation Hub #	Investment in the creation of a 100,000 sq. ft. data centre and co-located innovation hub providing 50,000 sq. ft. of flexible SMART Office workspace to include VR Studio space, Gigabit speed broadband, and a dedicated 5G O-RAN internal network.	Dataplex Ireland – Eddie Kilbane	Datacentre Operator, Investment partners	circa £85M	Private sector	Advanced development
9. Southport international data interchange #	Examine the potential for a programme to maximise low latency locational opportunities in and around trans-Atlantic fibreoptic cable landings at Southport.	Sefton Council - tbd	Southport BID, CA, JV partner, private sector	tbd	tbd	Concept
10. Hyperscaler clean growth infrastructure investment #	Explore innovation and investment opportunities linked to the wider energy requirements of enhanced digital infrastructure and usage.	CA – Mark Knowles	Private sector	tbd	tbd	Concept
1.4 Embed digital infrastructure/connectivity in other major LCR strategies & plans						
11. Housing	Maximise the positive impact of good quality housing on people’s health and wellbeing, by ‘future proofing’ the LCR housing stock through better quality design that bakes in digital connectivity and technology considerations	CA – Tim Jago	-	n/a	n/a	Live
12. Planning	Include a digital connectivity policy within the LCR Spatial Development Strategy, plus include digital infrastructure within the LCR Strategic Infrastructure Plan.	CA – Mark Dickens	-	n/a	n/a	Advanced development
13. Employment & skills	Included digital infrastructure and/or connectivity roles and skills within the development of future programmes and funding submissions.	CA – Rob Tabb	Local Authorities, delivery partners	tbd	tbd	Early development
14. Energy/Clean Growth	Exploit the benefits of digitalisation and the digital strategy as a means through which to deliver the Year 1 Climate Action Plan and improve air quality.	CA – Mark Knowles	Climate Partnership, CA, LAs and wider stakeholders	tbd	tbd	Early development

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Theme 2: Tech for Good & a Smart City Region						
2.1 Enhance data-led approaches, plus overall LCR digital agenda capacity & governance						
15. LCR Digital Governance	Review and revise current arrangements to create enhanced, integrated governance arrangements for all aspects of the LCR digital agenda, Strategy and Action Plan.	CA - tbd	LAs, LEP, HEIs, NHS, STFC, other anchor institutions, private sector, voluntary/ community sector	n/a	n/a	Early development
16. LCR digital policy, strategy & action plan capacity requirements	Review and benchmark the capacity and resources required to effectively develop, deliver, monitor and refine the Strategy and Action Plan going forward.	CA - tbd	LAs, LEP, HEIs, NHS, STFC, other anchor institutions, private sector, voluntary/ community sector	tbd	tbd	Concept
17. LCR Smart City Region Task Group	Building on the 2020 LCR Smart City Symposium and position statement, establish a multi-stakeholder task group to advise and make recommendations on smart city region related issues, priorities and use cases, plus oversee production of a data strategy and ethics protocol.	CA - tbd	LAs, LEP, HEIs, NHS, STFC, other anchor institutions, private sector, voluntary/ community sector	n/a	n/a	Concept
18. LCR Data Strategy	Linked to the new UK government data strategy, develop a first ever LCR strategy setting out collective approaches to the collation and application of data, recognising data as a form of individual IP, and with suitable ethics protocols, to support smart city region development aspirations.	CA - tbd	LAs, LEP, HEIs, NHS, STFC, other anchor institutions, private sector, voluntary/ community sector	tbd	tbd	Concept
2.2 Develop, deliver & scale up Tech for Good projects						
19. Civic Data Cooperative (CDC)	The CDC will comprehensively integrate and improve capabilities for cleaning up anonymised health data, and provide new secure data analytics tools to deliver better care services and health outcomes, as well as attract innovators and create new health technology jobs.	Liverpool Health Partners – Iain Buchan	UoL, LJMU, NHS	£5.3M	SIF	Live
20. Health Innovation Liverpool (the HILL): v-HILL #	As part of the overall HILL health innovation cluster development in Knowledge Quarter Liverpool, a virtual component (v-HILL) will deliver new digital infrastructure that builds on the CDC and open health innovation platforms, while integrating NHS and care records to enable timely identification and management of diseases.	UoL – Amanda Lamb	NHS, Liverpool City Council	tbd	tbd	Advanced development
21. Smart Ticketing #	To enable public transport tickets to be purchased and used on digital platforms, and ultimately lead towards a London-style integrated ticketing system, offering a fair price promise where lower possible fares are automatically calculated on the customer's behalf.	CA – Gary Evans	Merseyrail, bus operators, private sector	£3.5m	Transforming Cities Fund	Advanced development

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22. Alderhey@nywhere open innovation system pipeline infrastructure - @dvancingsafety - safe@ccesstocare	Real world problem-led healthcare innovation programme and pipeline: resources and open innovation methodology to enable cocreation of new and deployment of innovative technology, plus infrastructure and processes to connect problems with solutions, brokering collaborations across clinical, academic and industry experts.	Alder Hey NHS Foundation Trust - Claire Liddy	CA, Liverpool Health Partners, private sector (large, SME, & start-ups), HEIs, tech solution/ scouting partners	£9.75m	tbd	Advanced development
23. Global Immersive Health Tech Centre #	To deliver the "Living Hospital" strategy via a dedicated building including digital labs, health-tech testbed and co-creation space, plus space for embedded industry teams and tenants.	Alder Hey NHS Foundation Trust.- Claire Liddy	CA, Liverpool Health Partners, large corporate sponsor (TBC), Science park partner (TBC)	£23.1m	tbd	Early development
24. National Dementia Centre #	As an integral part of the Goodison Park legacy project, this new facility will provide research, care and an extensive portfolio of dementia content and support programmes – including an immersive theatre that has the ability to stream specially designed programmes nationally and internationally - harnessing the power of football to engage people living with dementia, intergenerational audiences and hard to reach communities.	Everton FC – Martin Carey	NHS, Everton in the Community, LJMU, UoL, Edge Hill University, Hope University, City of Liverpool College, NML, voluntary/ community sector	£25M	tbd	Early development
2.3 Living labs & people-focused challenge programmes						
25. Public engagement & communications programme	Comprehensive, long-term campaign to engage LCR residents and businesses to identify and prioritise challenges and solutions, plus highlight and explain opportunities and benefits associated with all aspects of "digital" beyond physical infrastructure, plus counteract mis-information.	CA - tbd	Local Authorities voluntary/ community sector, NHS, private sector, HEIs	tbd	tbd	Concept
26. Everton FC living lab	Using the stadium and match day crowds, plus wider Everton in the Community programmes, to develop and analyse data sets to improve LCR population health.	Everton in the Community - Richard Kenyon	HEIs, voluntary/ community sector, NHS, private sector, LCC/Local Authorities	tbd	tbd	Concept
27. Town Centre tech for good initiatives	Benchmark how town centres are performing across a range of digital metrics and develop and deliver new /digital projects and activities as part of a collective response to the IPPR Commission recommendations.	Local Authorities	CA, Private sector, voluntary/ community sector	tbd	tbd	Concept

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Theme 3: Digital & CreaTech Sector Development						
3.1 Business support & scale up						
28. Daresbury Digital Cluster	Formal establishment and launch of the digital cluster, and development/delivery of an associated action plan to create critical mass and a cluster effect around STFC Hartree Centre and IBM Research.	STFC - James Bedford	Private sector	n/a	n/a	Advanced development
29. Tech Accelerator	Develop and deliver a corporate accelerator/ innovation programme to facilitate enhanced access between SMEs and large corporates/ public sector bodies.	Private sector	CA, private sector, anchor institutions	£4M	SIF/ private	Advanced development
30. Open Source Payments Infrastructure	Develop open source blockchain platforms that allow frictionless transactions between SMEs and consumers and enable new methods of B2C business, towards the creation of a new LCR blockchain tech cluster.	CA – Ben Heywood	Private sector	£1M	tbd	Early development
31. Unlocking finance for digital/createch sector SMEs	Develop and deliver a new programme/model to support businesses to unlock finance both within their business (e.g. from R&D tax claims) and in the wider innovation landscape (e.g. through bid-writing support).	Growth Platform – Helen Cross	SMEs	tbd	tbd	Concept
3.2 Provide attractive business places & tech workspaces						
32. Enabling infrastructure for Sci-Tech Daresbury campus expansion #	The campus/Enterprise Zone houses 130+ businesses and nearly 1,500 employees, but existing buildings are at 90+% occupancy and reaching capacity. This project will acquire expansion land, study feasibility, apply for planning permission, deliver the Infrastructure - to include new loop road and canal bridge crossings - plus design and delivery of the proposed amenity building.	Sci-Tech Daresbury JV - John Leake	Langtree, STFC, Halton MBC	£24.7M	EZ, private, SIF	Advanced development
33. LJMU's Dream Factory: Liverpool's Entertainment Technology Centre (ETC)	The ETC to be created at the former Littlewoods building will facilitate the application of new technology to a range of sectors from TV, film, gaming and immersive, to health, engineering and business. This will be the first ETC in the UK, positioning the LCR and LJMU as global leaders in technology application and advancement, and will sit alongside project partner and anchor tenant Twickenham Studio, with a dedicated skills component.	LJMU - Joe Yates/ Rachel McLean	Twickenham Studios, The Creative District Company, Liverpool City Council, Hugh Baird College (other partners in discussion).	£3.8M	SIF, LJMU	Advanced development (Build to start mid-2021 and be completed by May 2023. Academic delivery onsite September 2023)
34. Town centre tech. business workspaces	Embed in town centre planning and provide new flexible town centre workspace for digital and creative businesses, to include offices, studios, exhibition and event space in each local authority area.	Local Authorities	CA, private sector	tbd	tbd	Early development

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3.3 Facilitate access to new & international markets						
35. NW Space Strategy & Cluster	The development of a NW space strategy as a precursor to formally establishing and supporting the growth of the NW space cluster.	STFC – Alan Cross	CA, LCR LEP, Cheshire & Warrington LEP, Cumbria LEP, Lancashire LEP, GM LEP, UKRI (STFC, NERC, BBSRC, EPSRC, Innovate UK), NSC, NWAAs, The Innovation Caucus	n/a	n/a	Live
36. Liverpool LegalTech Lab	The aim is to establish a Liverpool LegalTech Laboratory (LLL) in Liverpool City Region. The LLL will support sustainable economic growth by providing LegalTech knowledge transfer and skills development opportunities for organisations involved in the provision of legal services, through engagement with world-leading interdisciplinary research and innovation excellence in Artificial Intelligence and Law.	UoL – Katie Atkinson	Private sector	£14M	tbd	Advanced development
37. The Goodison Experience	2-stage programme to create a national 5G immersive commercial visitor centre at Everton’s new stadium (stage 2), with specifically designed programmes for people living with dementia, building on commercial, health and regeneration tests and trials at the Blue Base (stage 1), an Everton in the Community (EITC) venue in L4.	Everton FC – Martin Carey	LJMU, private sector, UoL	£19.8M	tbd	Advanced development
38. Total Immersion	Phase 1 of this project to maximise Liverpool’s established immersive technology ecosystem will see the development of 4 high-quality integrated reality projects and the establishment of a new model for sharing immersive technology. The end point is the creation of a 3D augmented reality visitor attraction with immersive digital experience at its heart, which will also create a public platform for presenting new content and ideas from LCR immersive tech businesses.	LCC – Robin Kemp	3 HEIs, private sector	£2.6M	SIF	Advanced development
39. Growth sector interconnections	Dedicated resource and activities to connect LCR tech businesses with sectors slow to adopt technology - notably Hospitality, Education, Health & Social Care - embed innovation into them, and ensure better integration with the Cultural Sector in particular.	Growth Platform - Helen Cross (& other sector leads)	CA, private sector, anchor institutions, national bodies	tbd	SIF/ ERDF	Concept
40. EFC Sports Science	Collaboration with a global digital company and/ potentially local SMEs to generate click-based commercial revenue, potentially involving other Premier League and/or European football clubs, plus other sports, with some of proceeds being invested in local community health improvement.	Everton FC – Richard Kenyon	Private sector	tbd	tbd	Concept

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3.4 Place marketing & inward investment						
41. Tech Climbers	To identify and promote new and/or the best LCR scaling tech companies in support of their growth.	Growth Platform – Helen Cross	Invest Liverpool, private sector	£25K	Invest Liverpool/ private sector	Live
42. LCR Digital Summit	Annual showcase event to bring LCR companies as well as national bodies together for programme development, networking and learning, including private sector run specialist thematic meet -up	Growth Platform – Helen Cross	CA, private sector, anchor institutions, national bodies	£25K	Private sector	Live (annual)
43. Digital & Creative Competitive Value Proposition (CVP)	Produce a CVP – including immersive, gaming, e-sports, e-commerce etc. sub-sectors as part of wider suite across key growth sectors.	Growth Platform – Helen Cross	CA, private sector, anchor institutions, national bodies	tbd	CA/Growth Platform	Early development
44. National engagement & familiarisation	Engage with national bodies (Tech Nation, Immerse UK, NESTA, UKIE, Creative Industries Federation, Digital Catapult, Tech UK) – providing regular information and encouraging them to visit/host events here.	Growth Platform – Helen Cross	national bodies, private sector, CA, anchor institutions,	n/a	n/a	Concept
45. International programme	Develop an international programme to help LCR D&C increase overseas trade, connect with complementary clusters and companies in other parts of Europe and beyond, visit overseas clusters, host reciprocal trips, strengthen connections and share best practice.	Growth Platform – Helen Cross	CA, private sector, anchor institutions, national bodies	tbd	tbd	Concept

Theme 4: Cross-Sector Digitalisation & AI

4.1 Maximise our world-leading High Performance Computing & AI capabilities						
46. Hartree National Centre for Digital Innovation (HNCDI) #	The HNCDI will enable UK companies, large and small, to understand the potential of AI, and provide the specialist expertise and High Performance Computing (HPC) capability to help them tackle directly the complex tasks businesses face as they strive to gain competitive advantage. It will help forge links and pathways between cutting edge research and innovation adoption and position the UK as a global leader in the application of AI and High-Performance Computing to industrial challenges.	STFC Hartree Centre – Alison Kennedy	STFC/UKRI, BEIS, IBM, Sci-Tech Daresbury JV, LCR CA	£170M	UKRI, IBM, other industry	Advanced development
47. Daresbury Data Centre (DDC) #	This will replace the original 1965 data centre and provide a new strategic LCR asset designed in modular manner to enable further expansion to support emerging national and regional high performance computing opportunities, including the intended HNCDI.	STFC Hartree Centre – Alison Kennedy	STFC/UKRI, BEIS, IBM, Sci-Tech Daresbury JV, LCR CA	£30M	BEIS	Advanced development

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48. Quantum computing cluster	Expand the existing capability and nascent cluster based at Sci-Tech Daresbury, linked to the first UK deployment of an Atos Quantum Learning Machine, the highest performing quantum simulator in the world, to be used to develop new quantum-based services designed to help researchers and industry prepare for the coming quantum computing revolution.	STFC & Atos	IBM, private sector, HEIs	tbd	tbd	Early development
4.2 Deliver major projects to exploit our other competitive strengths						
49. iiCON: delivering integrated solutions for human health	Creating eight specialist, commercially sustainable digital research platforms for infectious disease therapeutics in north-west England that transform the efficiency of new product discovery, development, evaluation and impact assessment.	LSTM – Janet Hemingway	Unilever, other industry, AMR Centre, NHS, UoL	£113.6M	Strength in Places Fund, industry	Live
50. Digital materials chemistry for growth – Mobile Robotics Incubator	By partnering with a range of local and national funding agencies, and a number of very large R&D-intensive UK manufacturing companies co-investing in late stage research and new IP development, the Materials Innovation Factory (MIF) aims to establish Liverpool as the Silicon Valley of Digital Materials Chemistry.	MIF - Matt Reed	Industry, Government, UoL, CA	£23.3M	£8.3M SIF + £10m-£15m private	Advanced development
51. New Robotic Telescope (NRT) #	This will build the world's largest (4m) and fastest (30 seconds to target) robotic telescope, co-located with the current 2m Liverpool Telescope on La Palma. This will further grow the UK's ability to lead the world in scientific exploitation of robotic time-domain astronomy. LJMU's Astrophysics Research Institute will operate this national facility from its LCR base. NRT will also generate R&D opportunities in control and manufacturing of large precision structures and AI in terms of optimal resource scheduling, autonomous operations, and self-healing software systems.	LJMU - Iain Steele	Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias, University of Oviedo, Spain, National Astronomical Observatory of China, UoL	£24m	STFC, LJMU, Partners	Advanced development (intended construction April 2021; first light June 2025)
52. Port & logistics digitalisation & optimisation	Apply the modelling, simulation and business services expertise of LCR institutions to optimise Liverpool2 port efficiencies, plus other LCR port and logistics operations (Birkenhead, Speke, Weston), which also potentially links to the UK Freeports opportunity and local proposal if successful.	Peel Ports – Stephen Carr	UoL, LJMU, STFC, Local Authorities, private sector	tbd	tbd	Concept

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4.3 Drive technology diffusion & digital adoption across all sectors						
53. Manufacturing Technology Centre Digital Manufacturing Accelerator and Factory in a Box (FiaB) #	The programme aims to strengthen the LCR and NW digital manufacturing ecosystem to enhance global business competitiveness. It does this by creating a platform that provides companies with physical and digital testbeds, expertise, resources and regional technology providers to accelerate the development, adoption and commercialisation of digital manufacturing solutions that contribute towards long term sustainability, resilience and ability to exploit new business models and market opportunities.	MTC – Charlie Whitford	CA, LEP/Growth Platform, private sector, UoL, LJMU	£ 14.95M + £ 2.35M	SIF, MTC	Live
54. LCR4Start	This successor project to LCR4.0 supports LCR SME business leaders and companies to gain a competitive edge through the development of practical strategies for effective digital adoption.	UoL - Andy Levers	LJMU, STFC, LEP/Growth Platform	£3.9M	ESIF/ERDF, matched by partners	Live
55. LCR Holistic	Intensive assistance to companies to develop digital solutions across several key industry sectors, enabling them to be more agile and, better-equipped to weather market fluctuations and maximise sectoral changes/growth opportunities.	UoL – Andy Levers	LJMU, LEP/Growth Platform	£5.1M	ESIF/ERDF, matched by partners	Live
56. LCR Future Innovation Fund pilot + full scale programme	Launched as a £3m pilot in 2020 over 3 rounds to provide £25k-£75k grants for near to market innovations to SMEs with the potential to grow, diversify and realise emergent opportunities, with a particular focus on digitalisation. After 2 rounds, the pilot is a manifest success, and the intention is to scale it up to a £20M programme.	LCR CA – Ben Heywood	LEP/Growth Platform, SMEs, corporates, anchor institutions	£3m + £20M	CA, private sector	Live + advanced development
57. Digital Innovation Facility (DIF) #	This will facilitate collaborative R&D, and support businesses to exploit digital technologies in computer science, robotics, and engineering, distributed simulation and immersive visualisation. The DIF will be home to an immersive reality lab and four robotics labs dedicated to: social domestic care, the lab of the future, manufacturing, and extreme environments. Alongside the Virtual Engineering Centre based at Sci-Tech Daresbury, the DIF forms part of the new Institute of Digital Engineering and Autonomous Systems (IDEAS).	UoL – Andy Levers	CA	£12.7M	SIF, UoL	Advanced development (Opening Spring 2021)
58. Digitally integrated supply chain for clean growth	Specialist expertise and access to digital testbeds and bespoke R&D to help accelerate and de-risk product and process ideas to support the development of an innovative and competitive clean growth sector, and create a new “digital and digitally enabled” integrated supply chain.	UoL – Andy Levers	Private sector	£3M	tbd	Early development
59. AI innovation diffusion	Potential national pilot programme to diffuse the LCR’s AI capabilities to the LCR (and NW) business base with a potential initial focus on the health and low carbon sectors.	STFC – James Bedford	Innovate UK, CA, Growth Platform	£2.16M	tbd	Early development

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60. LCR 4IR asset mapping & Competitive Value Proposition (CVP)	Produce these as an integral element of the wider suite of CVPs) across all LCR key growth sectors for investment marketing purposes.	Growth Platform – Simon Reid	CA, private sector, HEIs, UKRI	tbd	CA/Growth Platform	Early development
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Theme 5: Digital Skills for Recovery & Growth

5.1 Create/maintain a comprehensive research & evidence base

61. Systematic data & evidence gathering	Ongoing data and evidence gathering re. digital skills needs as part of the Skills Advisory Panel evidence requirement, as an integral element of wider efforts to develop a comprehensive evidence base.	CA – Paul Amann	SAP Members, CA, LAs and wider stakeholders	tbd	tbd	Concept
62. Digital Skills for Growth Action Plan	Review and update the 2018-2020 Digital Skills for Growth Action Plan in light of subsequent social, economic and technological changes, and use the refreshed plan to inform future digital skills programmes and activity.	CA – Paul Amann	CA, LAs, private sector and digital partners	tbd	tbd	Concept

5.2 CV-19 recovery & basic skills initiatives

63. Digital Day	BIMA's annual Digital Day gives 11-16 year olds an insight into a world of digital careers. Students compete in a sponsored, nationwide digital challenge for a chance to win £500 cash for their school and some fantastic prizes for themselves.	BIMA Liverpool	Schools	n/a	n/a/	Live (annual)
64. Digital Skills for the Workplace	Learning from the initial pilot will be captured ahead of future delivery and rollout of activities.	CA – Paul Amann / Steve Hearty	Employers, D&C Board, training providers, JCP, other agencies that get people into work	£1m	LCRCA grant funded by DfE Digital Bootcamp funding	Live (pilot runs from September 2020 – March 2021)
65. AEB Digital Skills Entitlement	The Government is introducing a new Statutory Digital Entitlement for those aged over 19 funded through AEB for the academic year 20/21. This will ensure that adult learners with no or low digital skills will be entitled to fully funded IT training leading to a digital qualification, designed to help adults learn the essential skills, such as sending emails, completing online forms or using a tablet, which many people take for granted.	CA – Alison Gallagher	FE Colleges, AEB contract holders, sub-contractors	Over £1.2m	LCRCA AEB	Live

5.3 Match skills supply with industry demand across future growth sectors

66. Graduate Placements	ESF funded graduate placement programmes will be delivered with learnings from the Digital Accelerator Programme .	CA – Paul Amann	LCR HEIs	£3.6m	ESF Reserve Fund + £1.4M match funding	Live (Up to December 2022)
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67. Digital Skills Partnership	The Digital Skills Partnership will bring together employers, skills providers, and other stakeholders, and provide both the Digital & Creative and Employment & Skills boards with recommendations on digital skills investments, curriculum advice, and information on emerging trends.	CA – Paul Amann	Tbd based on exemplar models	tbd	DCMS	Advanced development
68. Digital T Levels	The Government is introducing a range of T Levels including Digital and IT, this will support students to develop skills for: digital support services; digital production, design and development; digital business services. This will require colleges to develop courses responsive to local employers and for local employers to provide a minimum of 315 hour industry placements.	CA – Kamal Choudhary	Hugh Baird College in first year, private sector	£600k for cohort of 20 in first year	ESFA - Early Adopter Fund	Advanced development. From September 2021
69. UoL Medical student Healthcare Technology & Design programme	Expand the numbers of new medical professionals engaged with innovation by providing the spark, skill set, and a credible career path in healthcare technology, as well as generating new IP and retaining graduates within the LCR.	Alder Hey – Iain Hennessey	UoL, private sector	tbd	tbd	Early development
70. Telecoms skills and employment programme	Directly linked to the delivery of the fibre backhaul network and local loops.	CA – Rob Tabb	JV partners, private sector, FE	tbd	tbd	Concept

Theme 6: Digital inclusion

5.1 Create/maintain a comprehensive research & evidence base

71. Evidence base	Research to identify data, gaps, and issues regarding the scale of digital inclusion across the LCR as a prelude to devising intended solutions.	CA – Olly Martins	Local Authorities, HEIs, FE, private sector, community/voluntary sector	tbd	tbd	Early development
72. Digital Social Value opportunities	Identify opportunities to deploy social value to improve digital inclusion, both directly through CA projects and programmes, and working with partner organisations.	CA – Olly Martins	Local Authorities, HEIs, FE, private sector, community/voluntary sector	tbd	tbd	Early development
73. Facilitate social housing digital connectivity & affordability initiatives	Collaborate with Registered Social Landlords to understand what issues their residents face to help them improve digital poverty and inclusion, and build up evidence and use cases through pilot schemes to support the rollout of solutions across the LCR social housing stock.	CA – Olly Martins	Social housing providers, community / voluntary sector	tbd	tbd	Early development

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5.2 Develop & deliver an effective, all-encompassing digital inclusion programme						
74. Programme development	(a) Collaboration to identify sustainable long-term solutions to help bridge the digital divide, through pilots, information-sharing and lobbying of government; (b) Find solutions that focus on digital inclusion, whilst also providing potential cost savings through digitisation of public sector services; (c) Recommended solutions progressed through relevant stages; business case, investment approvals, project development and project implementation channels.	CA – Ollly Martins	Local Authorities, HEIs, FE, private sector, community/voluntary sector	tbd	tbd	Early development
75. Programme governance	Digital inclusion needs to be on the agenda wherever positive impact can be achieved, e.g. via the delivery, commissioning, and the convening roles of the Combined Authority local authorities and other bodies, so dedicated governance required to provide direction, prioritisation and integration.	CA – Ollly Martins	Local Authorities, HEIs, FE, private sector, community/voluntary sector	tbd	tbd	Early development
76. Embed digital inclusion considerations across all LCR policies, programmes & services	Digital inclusion in all policies entails an approach that systematically takes account of the barriers faced to digital engagement (notably physical connectivity, cost and skills). We will seek synergies to reduce digital exclusion, avoid exacerbating the digital divide and ensure the needs of those who are not digitally connected continue to be considered.	CA – Ollly Martins	Local Authorities, HEIs, FE, private sector, community/voluntary sector	tbd	tbd	Early development
77. NHS programme to support people to access digital health/wellbeing services	Cheshire & Merseyside programme and directory of services and good practice, being developed by a pan-agency task group and consultation exercise.	MIAA/NHS - Jen Mason	Health Trusts, CA, LAs	-	-	Early development
5.3 Redress Digital Poverty						
78. Digital kit & connectivity	Consider extension of free equipment provision initiative using third sector providers via the LCR Cares Covid-19 Community Support Fund, plus providing digital kit, delivery, connection, and set up for existing ESF project participants. Potential also to consider a wider free broadband/connectivity scheme building on national commercial operator precedents as well as local initiatives.	CA – Ollly Martins & Paul Amann	VOLA Consortium Call in progress – successful bidder to be selected.	£55,000 Up to £130k	LCR Cares 100% ESF (no match requirement)	Live
79. AEB Transitional Fund	Support for colleges/providers to buy more KIT for those learners without.	CA – Alison Gallagher	FE Colleges, AEB contract holders, sub-contractors	£0.92M	LCRCA AEB	Live
80. LCR Digital Poverty Programme	Co-create with Government an ambitious programme to eradicate digital poverty by ensuring everyone in our City Region has access to hardware, broadband connections and basic digital Training, as set out in the Building Back Better Economic Recovery Plan.	CA -Ollly Martins	Local Authorities, HEIs, FE, private sector, community/voluntary sector	tbd	tbd	Early development