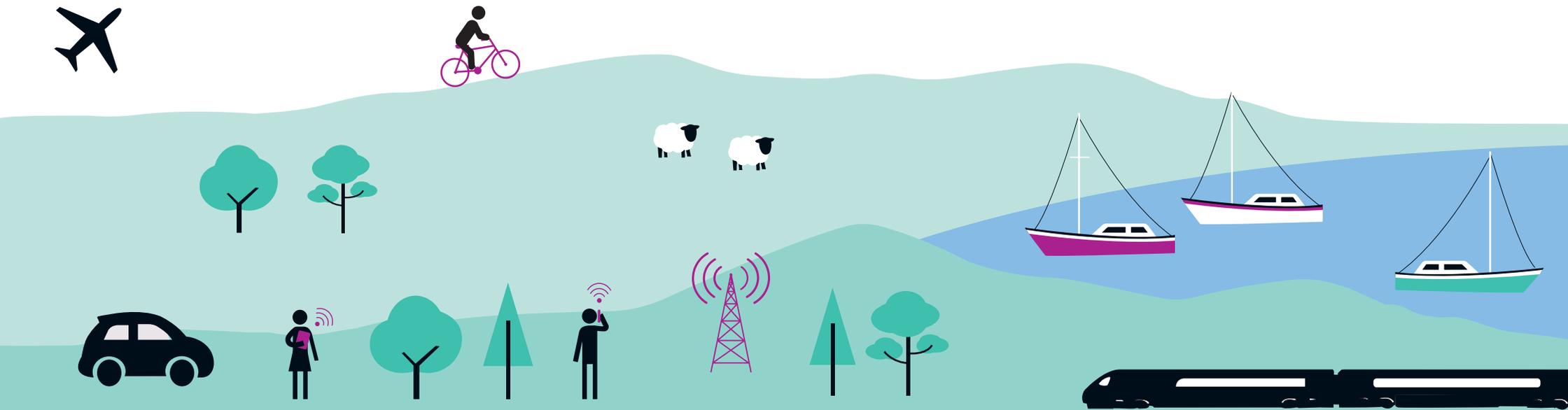




Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal

Progress Update - June 2020



Introduction

Our previous newsletter was sent out in February 2020, following our autumn conference and a lot has changed since then.

We know that Covid-19 is having a significant impact across our region, on our families, communities and businesses, and is causing both uncertainty and hardship. As we develop our Deal, we will need to make some changes to the timing and details of some of our programmes, to reflect the current emergency situation. This will help support the recovery and future development of our economy. We will ensure that will continue to work to our vision of sustainable and inclusive growth, which will be more vital than ever as we move forward.

We are reviewing our work so that we consider the impact of Covid-19 and adjust projects accordingly. This may mean that some work is brought forward, as it can quickly and directly support shorter-term recovery. Other work may move to delivery at a later date than originally planned, for example if resource is not immediately available to progress. However we remain committed to our programme of work and of supporting and developing our region as we recover and move forward from the current emergency.



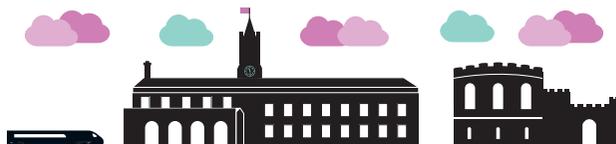
Progress with our projects

Since the last newsletter we have made good progress on a number of projects. These projects will be our key focus in the early years of the Deal. We are working closely with UK and Scottish Governments to accelerate investment in the projects to support and stimulate economic activity:



Digital Borderlands Voucher Scheme

We have submitted the business case to the UK Government and expect to launch the £4 million 'top-up' voucher scheme in Cumbria and Northumberland shortly. This is a key initiative, recognising the importance of full fibre digital connectivity, and will provide access to additional funding to 'top-up' the national Rural Gigabit Voucher scheme. Further details will be made available on the Borderlands website when this is launched.



Carlisle Citadels

The Citadels are a major gateway into the city and are a key part of the history and identity of Carlisle. As part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, £50 million of funding has been allocated for the second phase of work to bring new purpose to The Citadels. Plans are in place to transform the Citadels Buildings and the adjacent site to become a new home for the University of Cumbria. An online public consultation recently took place. Find out more at www.cumbria.gov.uk/CSGC



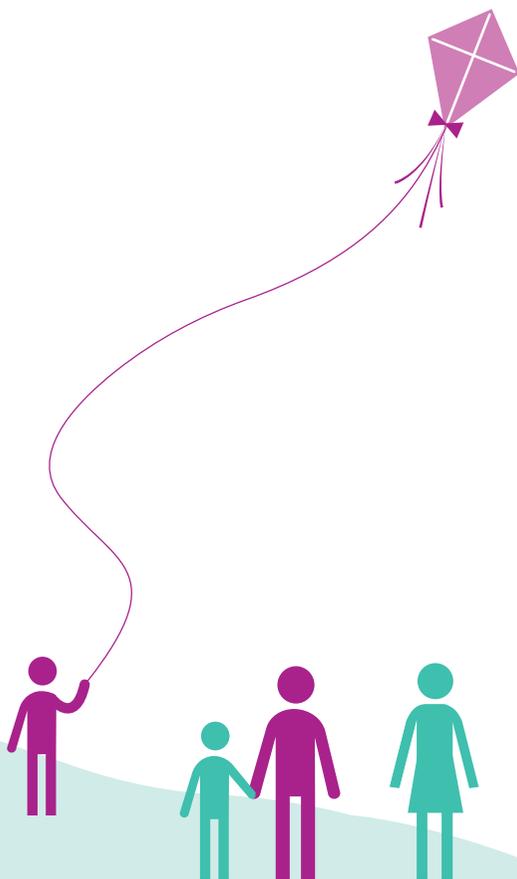
Carlisle Station Gateway

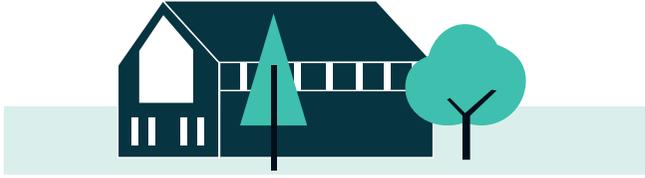
Following extensive public consultation earlier this year, we are working towards the finalisation of the business case. Subject to business case approval, this will see the investment of £15 million of Borderlands funding to transform the Carlisle Station as the gateway and arrival into Carlisle City Centre as well as providing improved infrastructure to support growth in passenger numbers and sustainable travel into and from the Borderlands region.



Alnwick Garden Lillidorei

As the first project to secure funding from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, this initiative will significantly add to the offer of The Alnwick Garden and wider area bringing in new tourists and encouraging more repeat visits. The Garden is now planning the construction phase and further details on the timescales will be announced later in the year - but this is a great example of how the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal can support projects that will help our economic recovery.





Ad Gefrin Distillery

This is the first project to emerge from our Business Infrastructure Programme and we are now working with the UK Government to assist in establishing Northumberland's first whisky distillery in the town of Wooler. Complete with a visitor centre, this initiative will generate over 100 jobs and again play a key part in our economic recovery.



Mountain Bike Innovation Centre

The Mountain Bike Innovation Centre planned for Innerleithen in the Scottish Borders will create a truly world class destination for research and development, innovation and tourism for the mountain bike industry. The project is making steady progress towards delivering an Outline Business Case in early summer.



Destination Tweed

The cornerstone to this project is the creation of a world class, source to sea trail that showcases the extraordinary natural, built and cultural assets of the region. This ambitious initiative also involves a wide portfolio of projects that will enhance and help market the region, educate people, promote business development and enhance the landscape, habitats and biodiversity of the River Tweed. Tweed Forum were recently awarded a Stage 1 pass by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a grant of £300k, match funded by Scottish Borders Council that will see a development phase of over £500k. This has enabled the recruitment of a project manager.





Dairy Innovation Centre

This project is progressing well, and a draft of the business case has been provided to both Scottish and UK Governments. Once approved this £8 million project will form part of a much wider investment to support the dairy industry by SRUC. Dairy is a key sector in Borderlands and particularly in Cumbria and Dumfries and Galloway. The project will provide cutting edge research on developing new value-added processes for the industry.



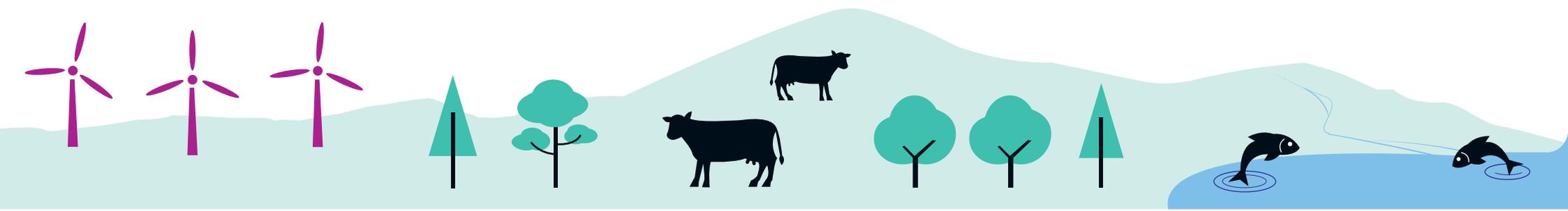
Energy Masterplan

The future of the Borderlands economy will be supported by its natural capacity to generate clean energy. The commissioning of the Energy Masterplan will be the first step in setting out the pathway to a net carbon zero region which has green energy at the heart of its economy. The commissioning process for the Masterplan will commence in June and the work delivered over the next 12 to 18 months. In addition to the Masterplan there will also be a series of detailed local area energy plans which will identify projects to be supported by the Energy Programme.



Digital Borderlands Infrastructure Strategy

Digital Borderlands is a key component of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal as an enabler of the broader programme as well as underpinning economic recovery and growth. Recognising the importance of digital infrastructure in supporting our rural economy, the Borderlands Partnership Board has approved a strategy that sets out the ambition of the Borderlands Partners and the benefits to be realised from investment in full fibre and mobile infrastructure. Delivery of this strategy is therefore critical to the region, not just from a digital inclusion perspective, but also to allow people to live and work in a connected world. The COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the need for high quality digital connectivity for all. This strategy is therefore of paramount importance within the Borderlands Partnership as a springboard to recovery. A copy of the strategy will shortly be available on the Borderlands website.



Setting up the Project Management Office

The first phase of our Project Management Office (PMO) is now established and is well equipped to support the finalisation of our Deal and move to delivery. We welcomed our new Programme Manager, James Davies, in March, joining us from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership. In his seven and half years there, James worked with a wide range of partners to secure and deliver investment in economic development projects. This included developing the strategy for over £430m through the European Structural and Investment Funds, managing investment for 21 Enterprise Zone sites and programme managing the Innovation Programme including two mini-funds for incubation space and project development. Having grown up in northern England and studied in Scotland, he is particularly enthusiastic about the cross-border nature of the partnership.

He is supported by three Senior Programme Officers and a Project Administrator. Sarah Bruce joined at the end of April, from Forestry Commission England, and will be working full time on the programme. The other team members are well established with the Borderlands programme. Chris Edwards, from Cumbria County Council, and Angela McDougall are both working part time as Senior Programme Officers and have been involved in the programme over the last year. Chris is combining this role with his Cumbria County Council work and Angela joins the team having previously worked on the Programme at Carlisle City Council. Aimee Roberts joins the team from Dumfries and Galloway Council as Project Administrator.

It is a strange time to establish a new team, but the team is getting to know each other and partners virtually and are all looking forward to meeting everyone in person once we are able.

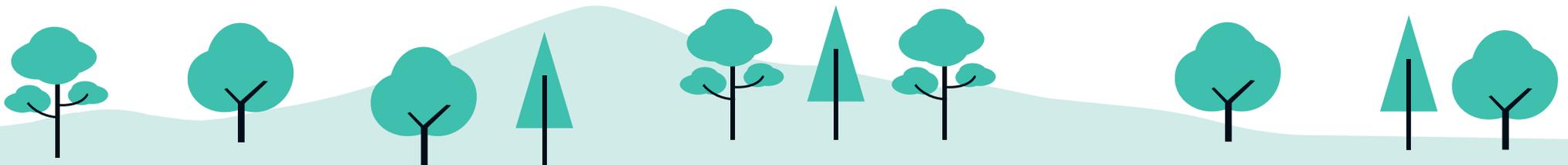
Progress in preparing the Deal

One of the first tasks for the PMO is to develop and implement a robust Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the Deal. This Framework is an important part of the Deal documentation. It will set out what we are aiming to achieve through the Deal and how we will evaluate our progress as well as provide the framework for projects in development.

In taking this forward we are very aware of the impact of Covid-19 on both the Borderlands and the wider economy and we are building this into our work. To help us to understand this we are completing an assessment of Covid-19 on our particular projects and looking to take forward work with regional partners to understand the broader implications for our businesses and communities.

Alongside this work we are continuing to develop the processes to manage the programme so that we can move quickly once the deal is approved.

We look forward to sharing more progress on this in future newsletters



Next Steps

We are continuing to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the projects and overall programme and are working closely with both the UK and Scottish Governments, and our project board, to ensure our work is focussed on supporting the short term recovery of the region as well as retaining focus on our long term programme aims, most urgently what can we bring forward to support the recovery of the Borderlands area in the shorter term.

Contact us

If you'd like any more information on any of the topics in the newsletter, or on the Deal in general, please visit our website www.borderlandsgrowth.com or email us at info@borderlandsgrowth.com

If you've not already signed up to receive these newsletter direct, please sign up at <https://www.borderlandsgrowth.com/Get-Involved>

